CrossGen
#1 OCT 2003
El Cazador™
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crossgen.com
Chuck Dixon
Steve Epting
Frank D'Armata

It is

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1687

Europe is in a rare moment of peace, though there is a sense that old rivals are simply gathering strength for renewed hostilities. King James II sits uneasy on the English throne. Louis XIV of France looks ravenously beyond his borders to Spain. Phillip V longs for the days when his Spanish Armada ruled the seas. Innocent XI is pope and schemes to return Europe to a fiefdom of the Holy Sea.

And while the Old World basks in a momentary respite, the lands beyond are a cauldron of violence and greed. For these are the final days of the Golden Age of Piracy, when no ship was safe whether it sail the waters of the East Indies or follow the currents to the Caribbean. Villainous craft crewed by traitors, deserters, thieves, freed slaves, and worse roam virtually untroubled over the world's oceans bringing misery and death to all who plied their trade upon the seas or made their home along unprotected coasts.

They were cutthroats and devils who flew colors that warned of a terrible retribution toward any who oppose them. And often these colors hid their true mission, for many of these freebooters sailed secretly under the protection of the crowns of Europe.

Our tale is one of revenge, horror and heroism. We have hewed as close to the truth of events as we ware able. It is for the reader to discern fact from fiction, actuality from speculation.

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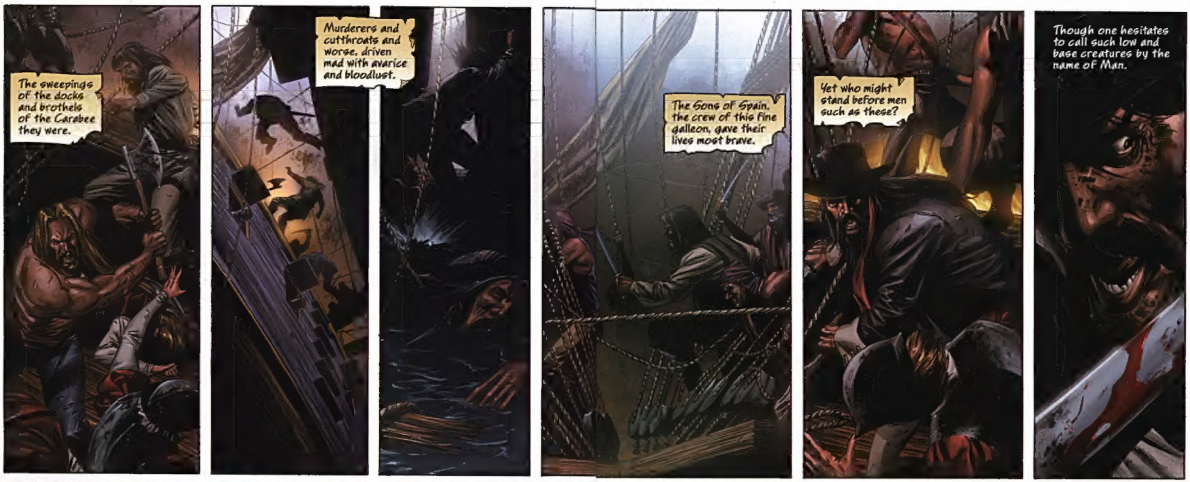
The log of La Miseracordia, the Year of our Lord 1687. December the 10th. We sailed for Spain from Vera Cruz on gentle seas four days past.

A week from port, La Misericordia, and her escort El Guardian were set upon by thieves of the sea under the flag of piracy. Two ships they were, and began their pursuit on the afternoon of December the 8th. A day and a night they rode the wake of these two ships of Spain: our own ship and our valiant escort. Near eventide on the 9th, the outlaw vessels drew alongside and began a cannonade that crippled this ship and her companion. Our escort ship was caught under the guns of the villains and consigned to the depths with all hands aboard. God have mercy upon their souls.

The boucaniers of the larger of the two ships were quickly alongside our larboard side...
...and swept across our gunwales as a starving pack of wolves might. A hideous howl of menace erupted from their throats and they were soon among La Miseracordia's company.


The sweepings of the docks and brothels of the Carabee they were.
Murderers and cutthroats and worse, driven mad with avarice and bloodlust.
The Sons of Spain, the crew of this fine galleon, gave their lives most brave.
Yet who might stand before men such as these?
Though one hesitates to call such low and base creatures by the name of Man.

Still, they came on in such number and ferocity that the company of defenders of His Holy Majesty's ship were brought down before them as might a courageous stag before a pack of baying dogs.

One among La Miseratordia's rallied the sailors of the Crown.
Don Francisco Diego-Luis Hidalgo gave them heart to fight anew.
BACKS TO THE MAST AND NOT A STEP FURTHER, MI HERMANOS.
THESE HAVE NOT THE COURAGE TO TAKE A SHIP OF SPAIN!
Under his stern words and earnest promise of victory the stout crew found new courage.

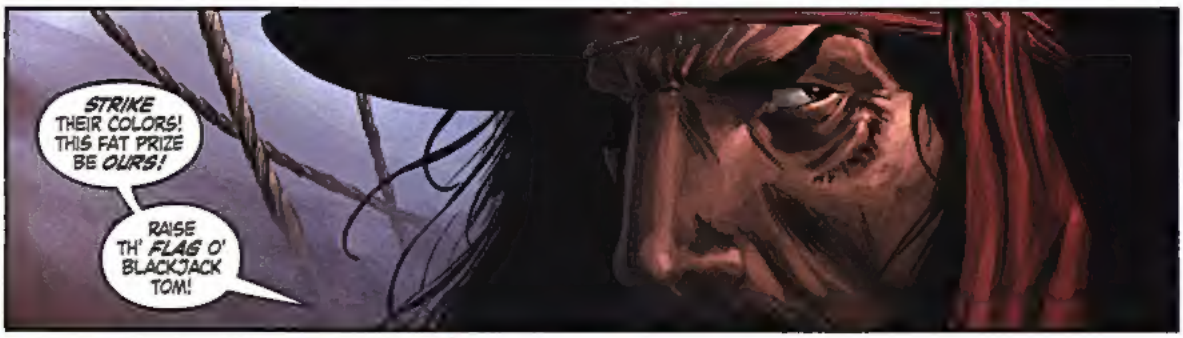
The brigands renewed the fury of their attack and swarmed across the deck for the main mast.

Don Francisco was laid low by a cowardly blow.

One sensed the change of fortune among the defending sailors as one does a dying of the wind just as a storm nears shore. The valor in their hearts was extinguished as though a flame.

The last hope of anything but a quick death fell as did the valiant Don.

THE WIND'S OUT OF YOUR SAILS, ME SPANISH LADDIES!
THROW DOWN ARMS AND WE'LL SEE WHAT MERCY WE METE OUT!


STRIKE THEIR COLORS! THIS FAT PRIZE BE OURS!
RAISE TH' FLAG O' BLACKJACK TOM!

So it was that La Misericordia passed from an honest ship of Providence to the service of Brethren of the Coast.

CAST YER EYES ON WHAT I FOUND *BELOWDECKS*, BILLIO!
FROM THE LOOK O' THEM FINE SILKS AND BRAIDS, I SAY THEY'S *DANDIES*.
AS FINE A PAIR OF *HOSTAGES* AS EVER BEGGED A RANSOM.
WHAT PRICE MIGHT *YOU* FETCH, MY'LADY?
YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WILL PAY THE COST ON A *GIBBET*, YOU ANIMAL!
HAW! STILL PLENTY O' SAUCE IN *THIS'N*, EH, BOYS?
MISTER DANE!
AYE, SKIPPER! HOW MIGHT I SERVE YER?
AS IF I WEREN'T AWARE.

BRING THE HOSTAGES ABOARD THE DEVIL'S DUE. I'LL HOLD 'EM IN MY CHARGE.
I THOUGHT I MIGHT TAKE 'EM UNDER ME OWN CARE SKIPPER.
YE'LL DO AS I SAY, DANE. YOU'LL COMMAND THE PRIZE SHIP AND BRING HER BACK TO THE CAY.
KEEP HALF YER BOARDING PARTY TO MAN THE PRIZE.
AYE, SKIPPER.
HAW!
MY SON! DO NOT HARM MY SON.
THIS ONE? BIT OF A RUNT, MADAM!
AND WHAT OF THE CREW AND CARGO, SKIPPER? SHE'S HEAVY WITH GOODS FOR SPAIN.
THEN LIGHTEN HER LOAD, BILLO.
YE KNOW THE WAY I TAUGHT YER, LAD.
And in the end the last of La Miseracordia's ship's company learned the bitter folly of their galleon's name. No tender mercy would be theirs.

The former galleon of His Holy Majesty King Phillip of Spain was brought about to make sail behind this sinner's armada under the Flag of Blackjack Tom, an English freebooter and scourge. Like a beaten dog, La Miseracordia followed her new masters to destinations unknown.

As night fell upon the sea, the maindeck rang with shouts and raucous laughter. Spirits were produced from the hold and cracked open with abandon.
The Devil and all his host held court that night on the boards still damp with the blood of the Spanish sailors.
OH, MISTER DANE! TIP A CUP MIT US, WARR?
TAKE CARE NOT T'DRINK ALL OUR PROFITS, LADS.
AND IT'S CAP'N DANE T'YER. I'M TAKIN' TO ME QUARTERS.

STRIKE ME, AN' WHERE YER BEEN HIDIN', FAIR ONE?
ME MEN SWEPT THIS VESSEL FORE AN' AFT!
POR FAVOR- DO NOT HARM ME.
HAS ONE O' THEM VILLAINS LAIN A HAND ON YE, MISS?
NO, SEÑOR. I REMAINED CONCEALED.

THAT'S FINE, THEN, IT IS. YER FRESH FER ME OWN ATTENTIONS.
SEÑOR--
--POR FAVOR--
LOOK, IT'S ME OR THEM DOGS ON THE MAINDECK.
--NO--
I'M DOIN' YER A FAVOR, LASS.
YOU'RE A RIPE PIECE O' GOODS, ME DEAR. BE HAPPY BLACKJACK DIDN'T CAST AN EYE ON YER.
BILLIO'LL TREAT YE RIGHT.
YOU SEE IF HE DON'T.
OH?

¡EL PUERCO MUGRIENTO!
¡PESTO MUCHO!
NO ONE TOUCHES ME WITHOUT MY LEAVE!

La Miseracordia was adrift in the mild currents and making south by southwest as the veil of darkness enshrouded the sea.
The illegitimate pack of scoundrels who had taken her lay besotted upon the deck while this galleon floated untended as might a bit of flotsam.
¡LOS PERROS Y LOS HIJOS DE PERROS!
TO YOUR FEET, VILLAINS!
'OO S SHOUTIN' SO?
BEAT N ME HEAD LIKE A DRUM.
ARISE, YOU LANGUISHING HOUNDS!

THOUGH THE SUN BE HOURS FROM RISING, 'TIS THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY!
ONE BARREL I HAVE LOADED WITH CHAIN TO SWEEP THE DECK CLEAN.
THE OTHER IS DOUBLESHOTTED TO PUT A HOLE NEATH HER WATERLINE.
DO AS I SAY OR I BLOW YOU TO BLOODY RAGS AND WE ALL GO TO THE BOTTOM!
THE CHOICE IS YOURS. SURRENDER OR DIE.
T' WENCH IS MAD!
WHAT SHE DONE WITH BILLIO?
'ERE NOW, DEARIE! YOU'LL SCARE US, YOU WILL!
STEP AWAY FROM THEM CARRONADES. I WARN YE!
I SHALL NOT.
I RECLAIM THIS VESSEL IN THE NAME OF HIS HOLY ROYAL HIGHNESS PHILLIP OF SPAIN!
YE'LL DO NO SUCH THING! TO BLAZES WITH YER DANDY KING!
LET'S 'AVE AT 'ER, SAWGUS!
AYE!
YE'LL DANCE A PRETTY DANCE AFORE I'M THROUGH WITH YE, LASS!

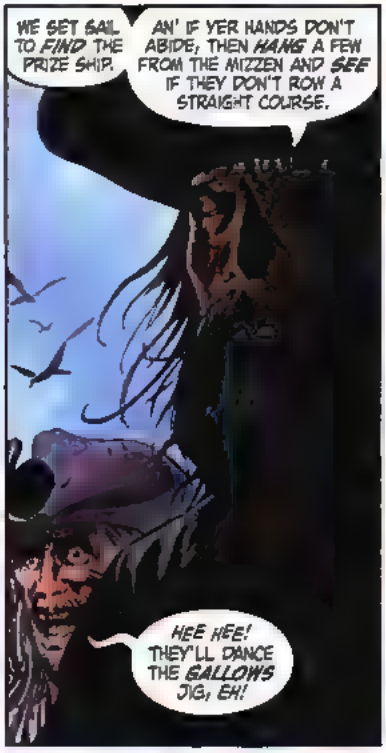
GARRH!
HELL'S BELLS!
SWEAR LOYALTY TO ME AS YOUR CAPTAIN AND HELP ME HUNT DOWN YOUR PIRATE LORD--
--SWEAR FEALTY TO ME AND I'LL SHOW YOU TO A HIDDEN SPANISH TREASURE PORT PILED WITH ENOUGH GOLD AND SILVER TO FOUNDER A FLEET OF SHIPS.
DO THIS OR FEED THE SHARKS, FOR I VOW BY THE NAME OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER I'LL TEAR THE HULL FROM THIS GALLEON!

WHAT SAY YE, LADDIES?
S'TRUTH. SHE'S NO WORSE THAN MANY I SERVED UNDER.
AND A PORT LOADED WITH LUCRE.
BEGGIN' YER PARDON, M'LADY--
--BY WHAT NAME MAY WE CALL YE?
YOU MAY CALL ME DONESSA CINZIA ELENA MARIA ESPERANZA DIEGO-LUIS HIDALGO.
HUZZAH FOR LADY SIN!

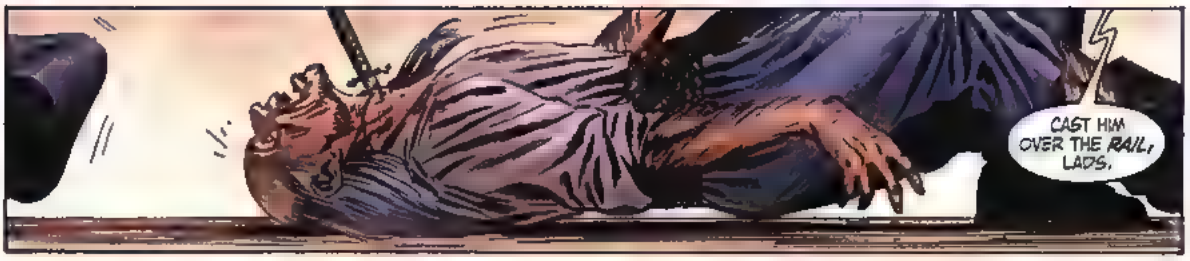
HUZZAH! HUZZAH! HUZZAH! FOR LADY SIN!
The Port of Parlatuvier on Tobago Isle.
DECK, THERE! CAPN CREED BEGS T'COME ABOARD!
LAY ALONGSIDE, SKIPPER.
SECURE TO THE CHAINS! STEADY NOW!
WHEN'RE WE GOIN' ASHORE? ME MEN ARE FAIR TO MUTINY IF ANOTHER DAY IS SPENT ASEA.
ELIJAH CREED!
IF YE CANNOT KEEP YER MEN IN CHECK, THEN MAYBE IT'S A NEW CAPN FOR THE BUTCHER'S BILL.
I PROMISED THEM A SPELL ASHORE, TOM, ME MATE.

BILLIO HAS NOT BROUGHT THE SPANISH PRIZE INTO PORT.
THE LAD MAY HAVE RUN INTO FOUL WEATHER.
OR MAYHAPS BILLIO HAS PARTED COMPANY, BLACKJACK. SET A COURSE ALL HIS OWN.

BILLIO AIN'T GOT THE GUTS GOD GAVE A WORM, CREED.
AND THE SEA'S AS FLAT AS GLASS. SOMETHIN'S ON THE WIND AND IT BLOWS ILL.


WE SET SAIL TO FIND THE PRIZE SHIP.
AN' IF YER HANDS DON'T ABIDE, THEN HANG A FEW FROM THE MIZZEN AND SEE IF THEY DON'T ROW A STRAIGHT COURSE.
HEE HEE! THEY'LL DANCE THE GALLOWS JIG, EH!

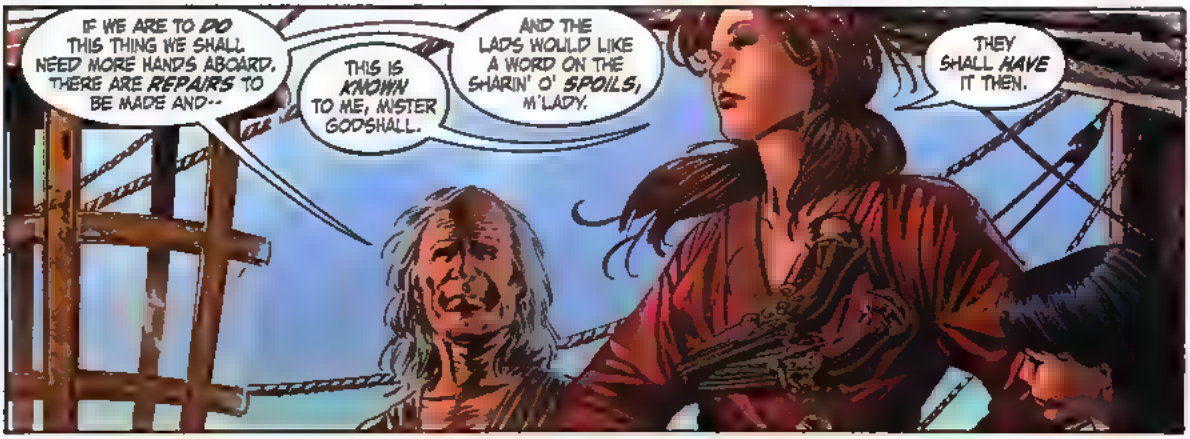
ENOUGH, OLD MAN.
YE AMUSE ME NO LONGER.
SGHAAK!!


CAST HIM OVER THE RAIL, LADS.

I'LL SEEK ME ENTERTAINMENT ELSEWHERE.
AYE, BLACKJACK SKIPPER.

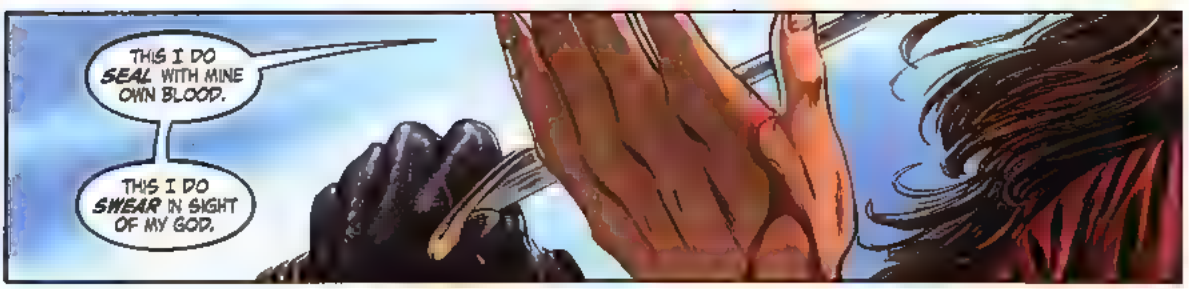
¡LA SANGRA DEL SALVADOR
WORRY NOT, AMADO GERARDITO.
WE WILL BE RESCUED. YOUR FATHER WILL PAY WHAT THESE DEVILS ASK.
AND THEY KNOW THAT WE ARE WORTHLESS TO THEM IF HARMED.
I WILL PROTECT YOU, MI MADRE. FRANCISCO FELL AND CINZIA IS GONE. BUT I AM HERE.
BRAVE BOY. I HOPE GOD DOES NOT TEST YOUR COURAGE.
"EVEN NOW, ALMIGHTY GOD WATCHES OVER US. HE HEARS OUR PRAYERS AND PROMISES TO DELIVER JUSTICE TO THE MEN WHO WOULD SEEK GOLD FOR OUR LIVES."
SHE'S DONE, M'LADY. I DON'T READ SPANISH LINGO. WHAT'S SHE MEAN?

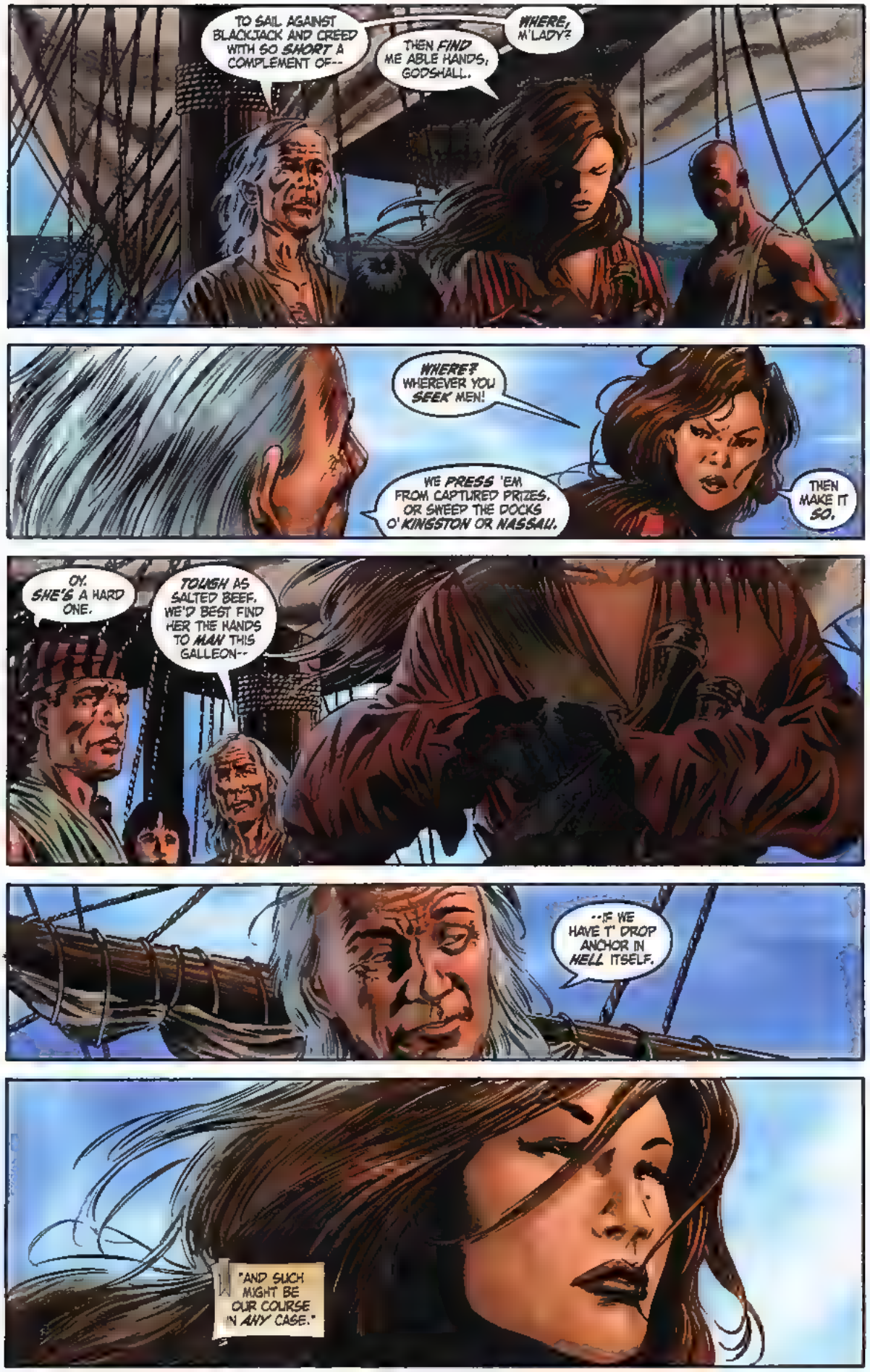
EL CAZADOR.
THE HUNTER.
NO MISERACORDIA; NO MERCY FOR OUR QUARRY.
'TIS A FITTING NAME; LA MIA SIGNORA.
AS BLACKJACK AND HIS CADRE ARE SOON TO DISCOVER, NIÑO.


IF WE ARE TO DO THIS THING WE SHALL NEED MORE HANDS ABOARD. THERE ARE REPAIRS TO BE MADE AND--
THIS IS KNOWN TO ME, MISTER GODSHALL.
AND THE LADS WOULD LIKE A WORD ON THE SHARIN' O' SPOILS, M'LADY.
THEY SHALL HAVE IT THEN.

LEND AN EAR, GENTLEMEN.
I WOULD SPEAK TO YOU ON THE ARTICLES OF THE BRETHREN OF THE COAST.
I WOULD HAVE YOU KNOW WHERE YOU STAND.

ALL WILL SHARE EQUALLY IN WHATEVER PRIZES ARE TAKEN BY EL CAZADOR.
ADSCITITIOUS AWARDS OF COIN WILL BE MADE TO THE FIRST WHO SPIES A LIKELY SAIL.
AND MY OWN SHARE GOES TO THE MAN WHO SLAYS BLACKJACK TOM!
WHEN THAT DAY DAWNS, WE SET A COURSE FOR THE TROVE OF COIN AND GEMS I PROMISED YOU.
ABIDE BY THE ARTICLES YOU SIGNED TO WHEN YOU ENTERED THE SWEET TRADE, AND I SHALL DO THE LIKE.


THIS I DO SEAL WITH MINE OWN BLOOD.
THIS I DO SWEAR IN SIGHT OF MY GOD.


TO SAIL AGAINST BLACKJACK AND CREED WITH SO SHORT A COMPLEMENT OF--
THEN FIND ME ABLE HANDS, GODSHALL..
WHERE, M'LADY?
WHERE? WHEREVER YOU SEEK MEN!
WE PRESS 'EM FROM CAPTURED PRIZES, OR SWEEP THE DOCKS O' KINGSTON OR NASSAU.
THEN MAKE IT SO.
OY. SHE'S A HARD ONE.
TOUGH AS SALTED BEEF. WE'D BEST FIND HER THE HANDS TO MAN THIS GALLEON--
--IF WE HAVE T' DROP ANCHOR IN HELL ITSELF.
"AND SUCH MIGHT BE OUR COURSE IN ANY CASE."

REDHAND HARRY.
JHZ
YOU ARE THE PIRATE CALLED REDHAND HARRY, CECI N'EST PAS VRAI?
I'M NO PIRATE, DAMN YOUR EYES. I'M A PRIVATEER.
AND BRITISH-BORN, COCHON. A MURDERER AND WORSE.
YOU WILL HANG AS SUCH AT DAWN.
YOU KNOW I'M A BLOODY PRIVATEER.
I'VE LETTERS OF MARQUE FROM A COMPANY OF ENGLISHMEN. I SAIL THE SAME AS ANY OF KING JAMES FLEET.

AND WHERE MIGHT THESE PAPERS GRANTING YOU LEAVE TO PREY UPON SHIPS OF FRANCE BE, EH?
YOU'VE LITTLE TIME TO PRODUCE THEM, MONSIEUR HARRY.
FOR BY MORNING LIGHT YOU MEET THE HOMME DE GIBET.
IF LES CRABES DO NOT FINISH YOU.
THE PRÊTRE WILL HEAR YOUR LAST CONFESSION.
I'LL HAVE NONE OF YOUR PAPIST MEWLINGS!
YOU MUST RECOUNT YOUR SINS IF YOU SEEK FORGIVENESS, MON FILS.
RECOUNT MY SINS? NOT IF YOU WANT TO HANG ME BY SUNRISE, FATHER.
AND REDHAND AIN'T HALF DONE SINNING. I'LL BE ADDING TO THE TALLY IN HELL BEFORE I LEAVE THIS ISLAND.
BRAVE WORDS, ANGLAIS.
WE SHALL SEE HOW SHARP YOUR WIT IS WITH A ROPE AROUND YOUR NECK!
LE PÈRE, LE FILS, ET LE SAINT-ESPRIT...

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Illustrator

Frank D'ARMATA
Colorist

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THE GOVERNOR

of the JAMAICA COLONY AT PORT ROYAL

declares these men wanted by the Crown for crimes Various and Despicable. These subjects are known to be scourges and rogues and freebooters and denounced as Pyrates. Each seeks refuge and anchorage in Tampa Bay along the Spanish Main.

CHARLES "Chuck" DIXON

is also known to his villainous fellows as

CAP'N NUBBIE

This former gentleman and landless wastrel hails from the Quaker Colony of Penn's Woods where he was infamous for earning his pay with a pen most honest and by Other Means less so.

He is wanted by His Royal Majesty for the crimes of mopery and re-using postage stamps.

EL CAZADOR #1 6 8/14/2003 5:47 PM

PAGE EIGHT AND NINE

INSET PANEL ONE

A good looking young Spaniard in a fine shirt and long dark hair waves a cutlass and holds a fearful Spanish sailor back from running. Musket men are with the young Don.

CAPTION:

One among La Misericordia's rallied the sailors of the Crown. Don Francisco Diego-Luis Hidalgo gave them heart to fight anew.

INSET PANEL TWO

The young Spaniard stabs a pirate through the heart as a fresh line of re-invigored sailors stand either side of him in a rank with their backs to the main mast. Spanish muskets take down pirates in the extreme foreground.

CAPTION:

Under his stern words and earnest promise of victory the stout crew found new courage.

INSET PANEL THREE

The pirates surge forward with re-newed fury, leaping the bodies of their dying brothers. A brawny bastard with bare chest and wild beard throws a boarding ax spinning toward us.

CAPTION:

The brigands re-newed the fury of their attack and swarmed across the deck for the main mast.

BIG SPREAD

The young Spaniard takes the ax full in the chest and stumbles back from the fight as his crew turns to him in horror.

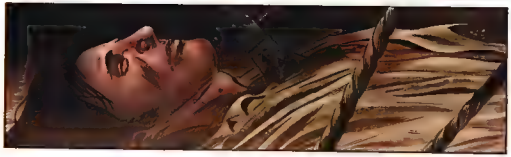
CAPTION:

Don Francisco was laid low by a cowardly blow. One sensed the change of fortune in the defending sailors as one does a dying of the wind just as a storm nears shore. The valor in their hearts was extinguished as though a flame. Then last hope of anything but a quick death fell as fell the valiant Don.

STEPHEN "Silent Steve" EPTING

is sought as an escaped servant in indenture to a plantation in the Carolina Colony. His talents range from a fair hand with a pencil to bloody work with a shrimp fork. He is late of the frigate known as The Cutlass Sedan and is often seen careening about the isles 'round Palm Harbor.

FRANCIS "Stutterin' Frank" D'ARMATA has origins in the Spaniard province of Tejas and is wanted by every crown that flies its colors o'er the Caribbee. This soulless cur is recently freed from the gaol at Parker's Landing and has sailed beyond the horizon. He is of short temper made shorter by strong drink. He is sought for punishment and hanging for the crime of loving too much.



DAVID "Deadhand Davy" LANPHEAR

has an unknown past and the source of his heritage and parentage are questionable at best. A fraud and charlatan, he has achieved criminal notoriety as a screever and montebank. He uses his devil-derived talents at calligraphy to relieve his unsuspecting victims of honest coin. His latest culling has been from the Marqui D'Alessi who wishes him flayed alive.

The brigands renewed the fury of their attack and swarmed across the deck for the main mast.
Don Francisco was laid low by a cowardly blow.
One sensed the change of fortune among the defending sailors as one does a dying of the wind just as a storm nears shore. The valor in their hearts was extinguished as though a flame.

Book Design by RANDALL "Red Randy" MARTIN

was taken as an infant from the French Colony of Toronto by hostiles of the Mikmak tribe and soon sold to Dominican missionaries who forced him to labor scrubbing cathedral floors in Ciudad de los Angeles. After decades of servitude this knave and backstabber wormed his way into a life of ill repute and low villainy as a forger and art thief.

CrossGen

#2 NOV 2003

El Cazador™

PIRATE SCANS!

crossgen.com

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Europe is in a rare moment of peace, though there is a sense that old rivals are simply gathering strength for renewed hostilities. King James II sits uneasy on the English throne. Louis XIV of France looks ravenously beyond his borders to Spain. Phillip V longs for the days when his Spanish Armada ruled the seas. Innocent XI is pope and schemes to return Europe to a fiefdom of the Holy See.

And while the Old World basks in a momentary respite, the lands beyond are a cauldron of violence and greed. For these are the final days of the Golden Age of Piracy, when no ship was safe whether it sailed the waters of the East Indies or followed the currents to the Caribbean.

Villainous craft crewed by traitors, deserters, thieves, freed slaves, and worse roamed virtually untroubled over the world's oceans bringing misery and death to all who plied their trade upon the seas or made their home along unprotected coasts.

They were cutthroats and devils who flew colors that warned of a terrible retribution toward any who dared oppose them. And often these colors hid their true mission, for many of these freebooters sailed secretly under the protection of the crowns of Europe.

Our tale is one of revenge, horror and heroism. We have hewed as close to the truth of events as we are able. It is for the reader to discern fact from fiction, actuality from speculation.

With a new name and a new destiny, Captain Sin sets course to follow the villainous pirate king Blackjack Tom to rescue her mother and young brother. But the seas ahead are angry ones as her crew of murderous cutthroats regains their sobriety and begins to question their choice to serve a female skipper.

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MUTINY.

JEAN GILLON WILL NOT FOLLOW THIS WOMAN. SHE IS NOT OF US. SHE IS NOT OF THE BRETHREN.
WHO WILL STAND WITH ME?
I WILL, GILLON.
AND I.
WHAT COURSE HAVE YE SET, FRENCHMAN?
WE ALL MADE OUR MARKS ON THE ARTICLES SHE PRESENTED.
BY THAT COVENANT WE'LL SWING FOR MUTINEERS.
WE MOVE SWIFT AND WE MOVE BOLD, NON? WE SLIT THIS CAPTAIN'S THROAT IN THE DARK.
A REWARD WILL BE OURS FROM BLACKJACK TOM FOR THE RETURN OF THIS PRIZE.

WHO IS WITH ME?
WE ALL ARE, GILLON. FOR GOOD OR ILL, OUR FORTUNES ARE--
--SPLICED.
OH.
SPADINO, THE SHIP'S BOY.
I WAS COMING TO FETCH MEAL FOR THE GALLEY AND--
HOW MUCH DID YOU HEAR, LITTLE ONE?
HEAR? I--I--
AFTER HIM!

SO, WHERE MIGHT WE *FIND* THIS BLACKJACK TOM?

HE'LL BE LOOK N' FOR SHELTER, M'LADY. A *LIKELY* PORT MIGHT BE--

--PARLATUVIER ON TOBAGO.

HERE, GODSHALL?

AYE, M'LADY. *THAT'S* A FAR BOLTHOLE FOR OL' BLACKJACK.

WE *OFTEN* HAVE ANCHORED THERE. THAT IS, *BEFORE* TAK'N SERVICE WITH *YOU*, M'LADY.

HOW MANY DAYS' *SAIL*, NOAH?

FIVE AT THE MOST. A *WEEK* IF WE RUN INTO FOUL SEAS.

WOULD BLACKJACK NOT MAKE FOR THE *HIDDEN* COVE YOU TOLD ME OF?

SERPENTHEAD CAY? IT'S ON *NO* MAP, M'LADY.

BLACKJACK TOM ONLY DROPS ANCHOR THERE WITH THE *CLOSEST* OF HIS COMPANY.

OI'M *NOT* AMONG THEIR NUMBER.

AND HOW GO REPAIRS, *SEÑOR* OAKES? WILL *EL CAZADOR* SOON BE *RESTORED*?

WELL, ME LADY, THE LADS *AIN'T* THE MOST PARTICULAR SAILORS, Y'SEE.

¿QUE DICE USTED?

ENTERIN' THE SWEET TRADE LEAVES BEHIND THE--*DISCIPLINE* OF A RIGHT ORDERLY CREW, ME LADY.

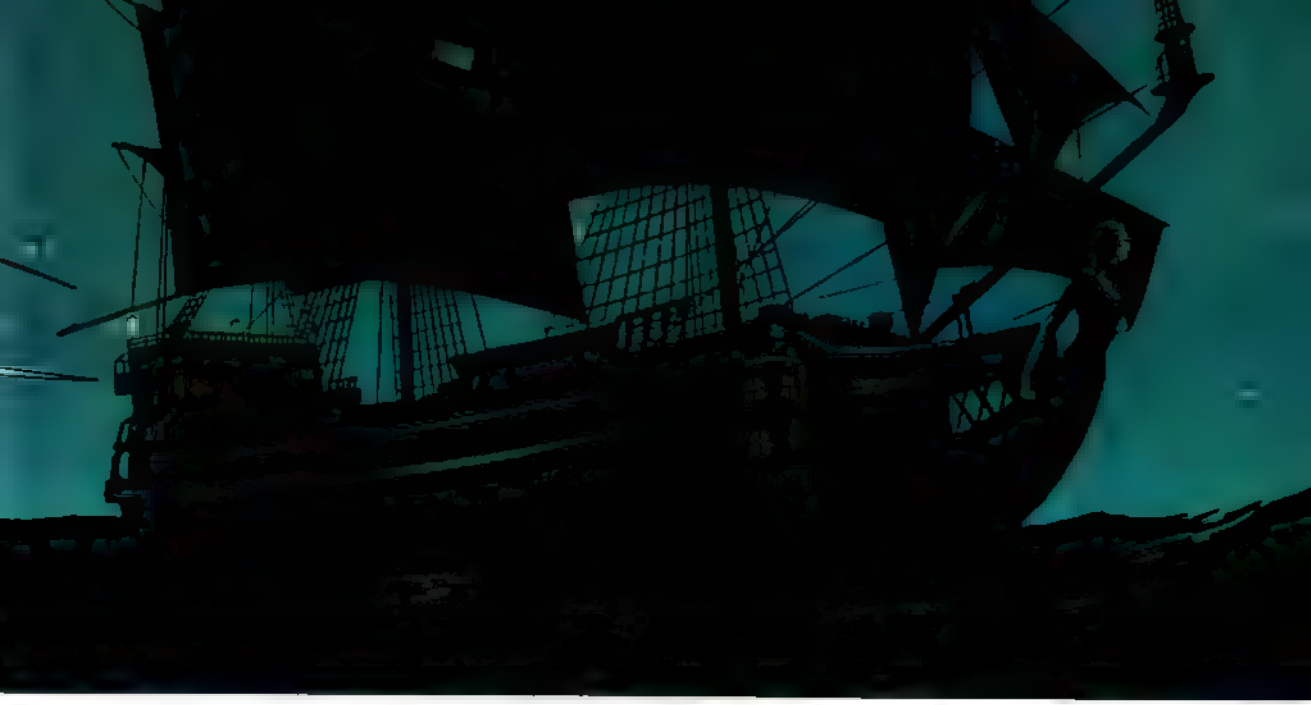
THE WORK *MUST* BE DONE, *SEÑOR* OAKES.

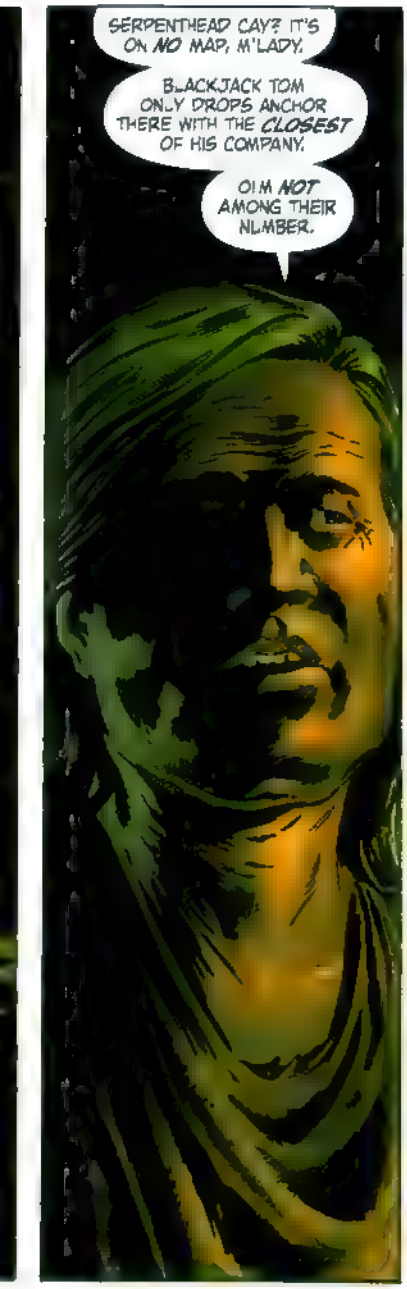
AYE, ME LADY.

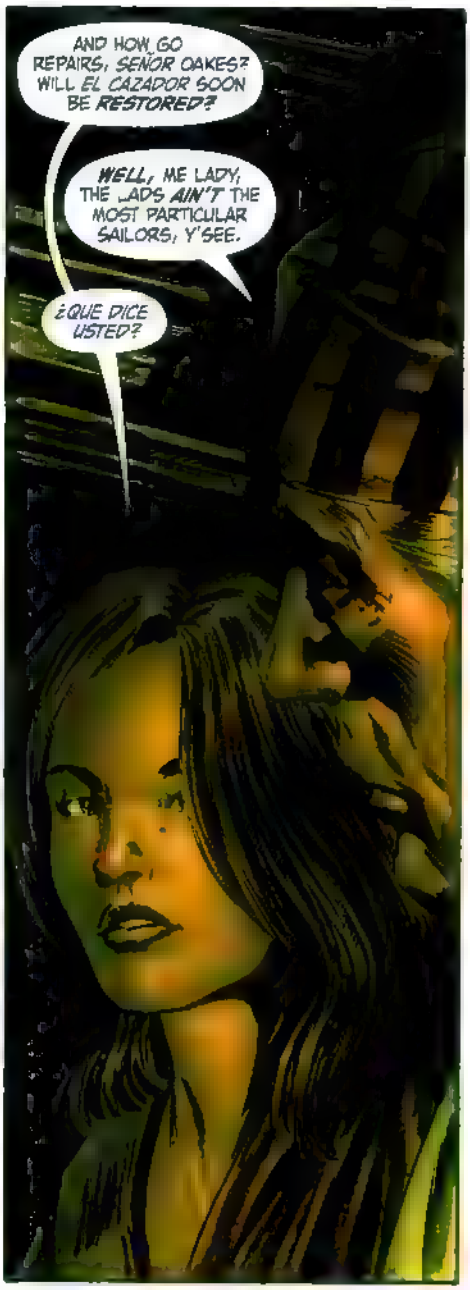
SO, WHERE MIGHT WE *FIND* THIS BLACKJACK TOM?
HE'LL BE LOOK'N FOR SHELTER, M'LADY. A *LIKELY* PORT MIGHT BE--

--PARLATUVIER ON TOBAGO.
HERE, GODSHALL?

AYE, M'LADY. *THAT'S* A FAR BOLTHOLE FOR OL' BLACKJACK.
WE *OFTEN* HAVE ANCHORED THERE. THAT IS *BEFORE* TAK'N SERVICE WITH *YOU,* M'LADY.
HOW MANY DAYS' *SAIL,* NOAH?
FIVE AT THE MOST. A *WEEK* IF WE RUN INTO FOUL SEAS.
WOULD BLACKJACK NOT MAKE FOR THE *HIDDEN* COVE YOU TOLD ME OF?




SERPENTHEAD CAY? IT'S ON NO MAP, M'LADY.
BLACKJACK TOM ONLY DROPS ANCHOR THERE WITH THE CLOSEST OF HIS COMPANY.
OI'M NOT AMONG THEIR NUMBER.


AND HOW GO REPAIRS, SEÑOR OAKES? WILL EL CAZADOR SOON BE RESTORED?
WELL, ME LADY, THE LADS AIN'T THE MOST PARTICULAR SAILORS, Y'SEE.
¿QUE DICE USTED?

ENTERIN' THE SWEET TRADE LEAVES BEHIND THE--DISCIPLINE OF A RIGHT ORDERLY CREW, ME LADY.
THE WORK MUST BE DONE, SEÑOR OAKES.
AYE, ME LADY.

"FULTON OAKES GIVE YE HIS WORD TO MAKE IT THUS."
SST! NOT A WORD!
MMM!

WHAT CHANCE HAVE WE OF FINDING THIS SERPENTHEAD CAY?
NOT A PRAYER, LADY SIN.
PLEASE, DO NOT CALL ME THAT.
IT IS WHAT THE LADS CALL YE.
IT IS NOT MY NAME.
THE MEN HAVE GIVEN YOU THIS NAME.
ABDULLA IS RIGHT, M'LADY. THEY CALL YE THAT FROM RESPECT.
THE WAY YE DONE FOR CAP'N DANE AN' STOOD UP T'SAWGUS.
ANY SHIP SAILS ON FEAR AND RESPECT IN EQUAL MEASURE, ME LADY.
WHEN LIONS ARE ABSENT, THE JACKALS DANCE.
'TIS THE REASON THEY ALLOW YOU AS CAPTAIN.
AND FOR WHAT REASON DO YOU THREE ALLOW?

THE PROMISE OF GOLD, M'LADY.
YE MENTIONED AN ISLAND TROVE, CAP'N--
"--F'R THAT WE'D SAIL T'HELL'S MOUTH."
YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED IN THIS BETRAYAL, I TRADITORI.
STILL YOUR TONGUE, ENFANT.
IF I AM FEELING MERCIFUL WHEN I BECOME CAPITAN, THEN I WILL LET YOU LIVE.
OI DON'T LIKE A WOMAN ON BOARD, LET ALONE STANDIN' AS CAP'N.
SOME O' THE LADS BELIEVE HER TALES O' SPANISH TREASURE.
IF THEY ARE NOT LIES WE WILL FIND OUT WHEN WE PUT HER TO THE TEST OF PAIN, NON?

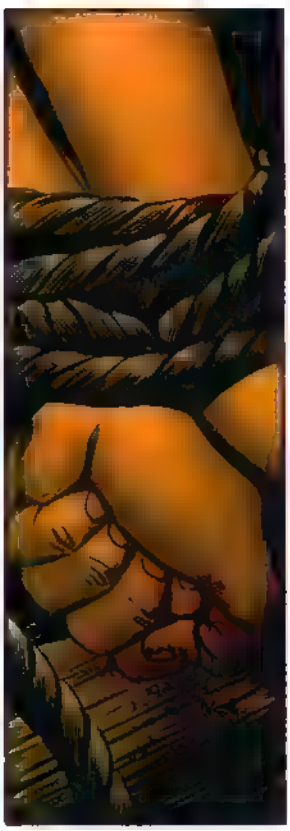
CAPTAIN--
A THOUSAND PARDONS, MY CAPTAIN.
SPEAK YOUR MIND, ABDHULLA.
YOU THINK OF YOUR LOVED ONES.
SI.
ONLY A FEW DAYS PAST I WAS RETURNING HOME TO CATALUNYA WITH MY BROTHERS AND MY MOTHER
MY ELDEST BROTHER IS NOW SLAIN, AND THE OTHERS ARE IN THE HAND OF THAT DEVIL.
ALLAH WATCHES OVER THEM, CAPTAIN,
IF IT IS HIS WILL YOU SHALL BE REUNITED.
COLD COMFORT, NO MATTER WHAT GOD HOLDS YOUR FATH,
WOULD THAT I COULD MOVE THE SUN THROUGH THE SKY AS THE CURRENT MOVES THIS GALLEON.

"I WOULD THEN HURRY THE DAY THAT I MIGHT SEE THEIR FACES AGAIN.
"THE FEAR THAT THIS WILL NEVER BE SO CLUTCHES AT MY HEART LIKE A FIST."
UNTIL THEN, I TAKE MY PLACE UPON THE QUARTERDECK.
I STAND BY THE WEATHER RAIL AS A CAPITAN SHOULD.
IS THAT NOT CORRECT, MISTER GODSHALL?
AYE, M'LADY.
THE SKIPPER'S PLACE IS HERE, WITH AN EYE TO THE SEA AND THE CREW.
USURPATEUR ESPAGNOL--

--ENJOY YOUR TIME ON THE QUARTERDECK AS YOU MAY.
AT WHAT HOUR WILL WE MAKE OUR PLAY GILLON?
THE NAME OF THE MOON STYERS

DUUR GOD! THERE'S RUST ON DIS BARREL, WAAR! WHERE IS DAT KLEINE AAP SPAD NO?
AIN'T SEEN HIM ABOUT, VAN WESSEL.
DOOR DE DUIVEL, THERE BE HELL TO PAY, JA?

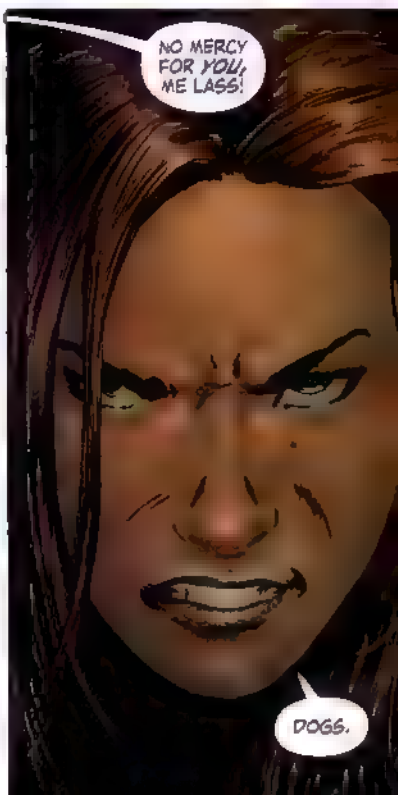
"DIS GO BAD FOR HIM, WAAR."



SIGNORA!
SPADINO! WHAT ACTS HERE?

YOU'RE HURT, POOR CHILD!
IL MIO CAPITANO-- MUST GUARD AGAINST--
WHO HAS DONE THIS TO YOU?

SPADINO?
LA MISERICORDIA DE DIOS, WHO HAS DONE THIS?!


NO MERCY FOR YOU, ME LASS!
DOGS.

WE'RE TAKIN' TH' T LLER AN' NO MISTAKE, ME LADY.
YOU SIGNED ARTICLES, YOU ROGUES!
PROMISES TO A WOMAN! NO MAN IS BOUND BY SUCH!
AGHK!
SHE KILL'D ME, LADS!
AT 'ER BOYS!
SHE CANNOT FEND OFF US ALL!
SHE'S MURDERED POOR B...!

¡LOS CANALLAS!
THIS IS HOW YOU HONOR A BLOOD OATH?
¡GAHK!¡
AND YOU WOULD HARM A MERE CHILD TO SEE YOUR DARK DEEDS DONE?
DID I HEAR THE REPORT OF GUNPOWDER, ABDULLAH?
ALLAH HAS GRANTED YOU THE EARS OF A PANTHER IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR SIGHT.
I SWEARS I HEARD A SHOT.
STEP FROM THE WHEEL, MON AMI ARABE.
THIS VESSEL IS UNDER THE COMMAND OF JEAN GILLON.
SIDE WITH LS AND BLACKJACK WILL SEE YOU RIGHT.

SIDE WITH THE FEMME DE CASTILLE AND DIE.
GILLON, IS IT? YE GO AGAINST THE VERY COVENANT YE SIGNED, GILLON.
I AM SOBER NOW, BLIND MAN.
"AND I AM NOT AN OLD MAN SO EASILY FLATTERED WITH HONEYED WORDS AND FAIRY TALES OF LOST GOLD.
"THIS WITCH WILL LEAD US TO WRECK AND RUIN."
AND ALL WHO FOLLOW HER ARE FOOLS.
I SOONER SERVE UNDER CAP'N SIN THAN TH' LIKES O'YE, YE SCUTTIN' FRENCHIE.
HAW!
SO, THIS IS THE WORTH OF YOUR LAWS OF THE SEA.
CE QUI?

YOUR WORD, YOUR HONOR MEANS SO LITTLE THAT YOU SPEND IT AS FREE AS THIS?
YOU WOULD CAUSE A CHILD TO SUFFER AND SLIT MY THROAT IN THE NIGHT?
YOU'VE LOST, MA FILLE. SURRENDER NOW AND I MAY CONSIDER TAKING YOU AS MY BRIDE.
AN ATTRACTIVE OFFER, GILLON. I HAVE A PROPOSAL OF MY OWN.
YOU WILL CROSS BLADES WITH ME AND ONLY ME.
AND EL CAZADOR IS THE PRIZE. DEFEAT ME AND THE SHIP IS YOURS.
OR WILL YOU SHRINK BEFORE THE FAIRER SEX?

FIGHT A WOMAN? I WOULD NOT STOOP TO SUCH A NOTION!
HUMOR THE WENCH, GILLON.
I'LL BE SPORT, IT WILL!
WHAT'S SHE ABOUT?
BETTER THE WILES OF THE SNAKE THAN THE SCHEMES OF A WOMAN.
MALEDICION!
IF YOU WISH TO DIE THEN LET IT BE BY MY HAND!
HA!

UH?
YOU THOUGHT ME A RABBIT, FRENCH SWINE?
MY FATHER TAUGHT ALL HIS CHILDREN TO USE A BLADE. IT S THE WAY OF CASTILLE.
NOW I SHALL TEACH YOU AS I WAS TAUGHT--
--AT THE POINT OF A BLADE OF FINE SPANISH STEEL.
THE DEVIL TAKE YOUR FATHER!

THIS IS NOT THE COURT OF THE DONS, BUT--
SHUNH!E
SAGHK!E
SUNNH!E
WHO IS THE MASTER OF EL CAZADOR?
YOU YOU ARE THE SHIPS MASTER

THIS ENDS BADLY, I FEAR.
HE WHO SOWS PLOTS REAPS POVERTY.
DIO LORO MARCISCE.
THEY WOULD HAVE KILLED THE SIGNORA.
IT'S NOT MERCY I WISHED FOR THEM, LAD. GILLON AND HIS DOGS SHOULD HAVE MET THE BITTER END OF A ROPE.
MAROONING'S TOO DECENT A FATE FOR 'EM.
THE CAPTAIN DOES AS SHE SEES FIT, GODSHALL--
-- IT IS NOT FOR US TO QUESTION HER ORDER.
"THIS VENGEANCE IS HERS TO DELIVER."

THERE SHE SAILS, THE LAST GLIMPSE O'HOPE WE'LL EVER SEE.
AYE, AND US WITH BUT A BARREL OF WATER 'TWEEN US.
AND YE FORGET THE PISTOLS SHE KINDLY LEFT US TO BLOW OUR OWN BRAINS OUT FORE THE THIRST STRANGLES US.
AND WE'VE NAUGHT TO BLAME BUT YOU, FRENCHMAN.
'TIS YOU WHO BROUGHT US TO THIS PRETTY END.
LES LACHES ET LES CHIENS!
SUNH!=
I SWEAR BY THE DEVIL'S BEARD, THIS IS NOT THE END OF JEAN GILLON!
I WILL FIND MY WAY FROM THIS ISLAND! I WILL SEE THAT PROUD HARLOT BEG ME FOR MERCY!
"AND NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN STAY ME FROM THAT COURSE!"

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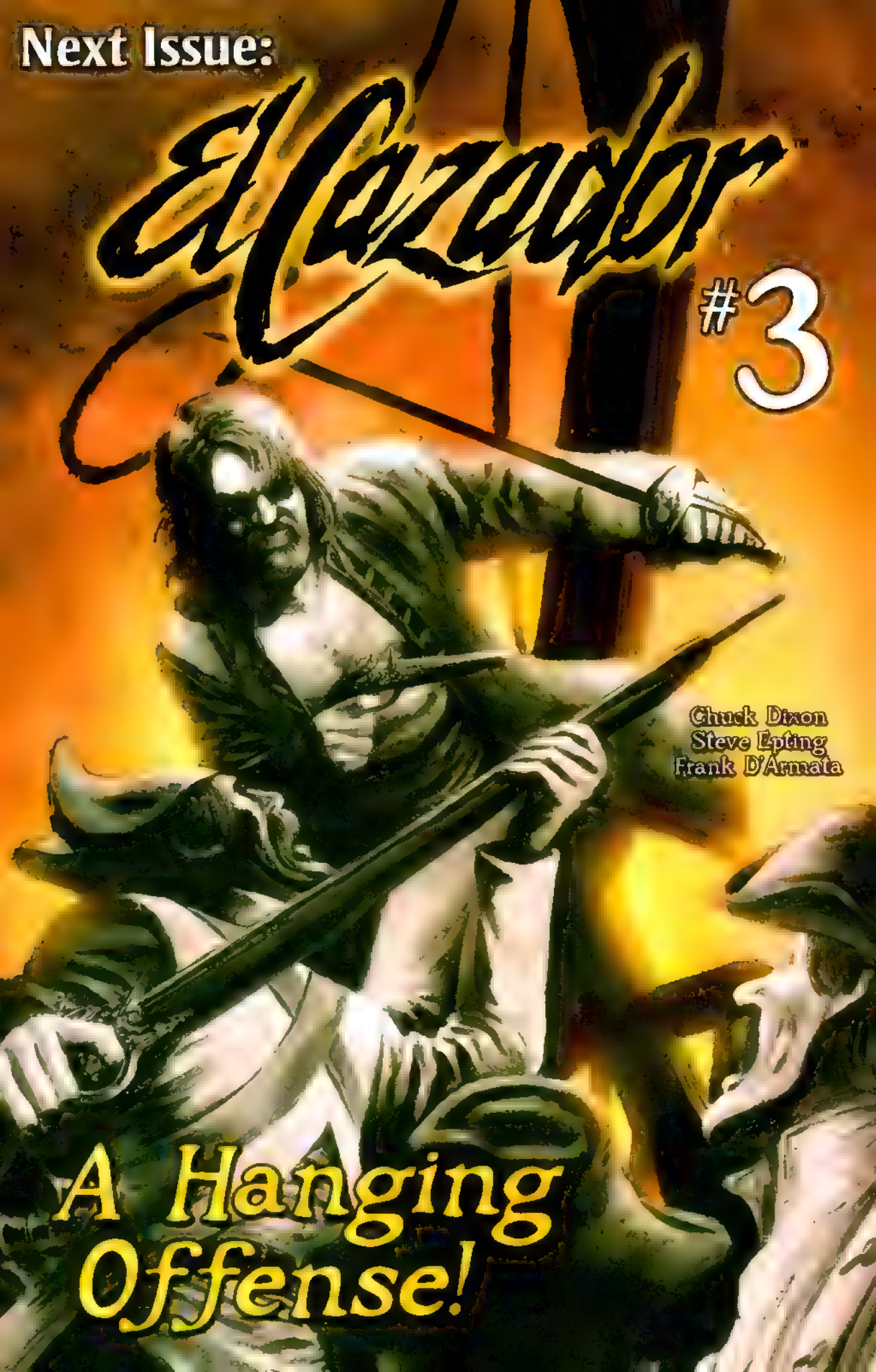
Next Issue:
El Cazador
#3
Chuck Dixon
Steve Epting
Frank D'Armata
A Hanging Offense!

CrossGen

#3 DEC 2003

El Cazador™

Chuck Dixon Steve Epting Jason Keith

It is

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1687

Europe is in a rare moment of peace, though there is a sense that old rivals are simply gathering strength for renewed hostilities. King James II sits uneasy on the English throne. Louis XIV of France looks ravenously beyond his borders to Spain. Phillip V longs for the days when his Spanish Armada ruled the seas. Innocent XI is pope and schemes to return Europe to a fiefdom of the Holy See.

And while the Old World basks in a momentary respite, the lands beyond are a cauldron of violence and greed. For these are the final days of the Golden Age of Piracy, when no ship was safe whether it sail the waters of the East Indies or follow the currents to the Caribbean.

Villainous craft crewed by traitors, deserters, thieves, and worse roamed virtually untroubled over the world's oceans bringing misery and death to all who plied their trade upon the seas or made their home along unprotected coasts

They were cutthroats and devils who flew colors that warned of a terrible retribution toward any who dared oppose them. And often these colors hid their true mission, for many of these freebooters sailed secretly under the protection of the crowns of Europe.

Our tale is one of revenge, horror, and heroism. We have hewed as close to the truth of events as we are able. It is for the reader to discern fact from fiction, actuality from speculation.

Redhand Harry Newcomb stands upon a French Gallows while Captain Sin faces life upon the high seas with a crew she cannot fully trust. Justice is rough on the coasts of the Caribee.

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HAROLD NEWCOMB.
ALSO CALLED REDHAND HARRY.
ALSO CALLED CAPITÁN ROUGE AND ENRIQUE ROJO.
YOU ARE TO BE HANGED UNTIL DEAD FOR THE FOLLOWING OFFENSES AGAINST THE CROWN OF FRANCE--

The Port of La Trinité on the Isle of Martinique.

--THE CRIME OF *PIRACY* AGAINST SHIPS FLYING THE FLAG OF LOUIS XIV.

THE *MURDER* OF NUMEROUS OF OUR GRACIOUS MONARCH'S SUBJECTS.

THE *DESPOILING* OF INNOCENT FRENCH WOMEN.

THE *PRESSING* OF FRENCH SUBJECTS INTO YOUR SERVICE AS FREEBOOTERS.

THE *SACKING* AND *BURNING* OF THE FRENCH PORT OF *CHATEAUBELAIR*.

SO FAR I HEAR *NOTHING* WORTH AN APOLOGY.

THEN PERHAPS WE MAY *DISPENSE* WITH THE READING OF YOUR SINS AND *PROCEED* WITH THE EXECUTION, *NON?*

SNS

QU'AVEZ-VOUS DIT?

I'VE SINNED.
I AIN'T DENYING THAT.
NONE OF MY TRANSGRESSIONS ARE ON YOUR LIST.
NO!

--MON FILS.
UH?
WHAT SAY YOU, PADRE?
HAVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH TO CONFESS?
QU'IMPORTE-T-IL? IT IS THE DEVIL YOU WILL BE SHAKING HANDS WITH.
WE WILL WASTE NO MORE TIME.
FAITES-LE DANSER!
OUI! FAITES TOMBER LE GIBET!
ALARME! ALARME!
QU'ARRIVE-T-IL?

FIRE SHIP!

NON!

C'EST HORRIBLE!

A LA COURSE!

LA VILLE ENTIÈRE BRÛLERA!

AMOUR DE DIEU!! IT IS THE WORK OF THIS BRIGAND ANGLAIS!
IT SAILS DIRECTLY FOR LE CYGNE DORÉ, GOUVERNEUR!
SHE'S PACKED WITH POWDER STORES FROM NOUVELLE-ORLÉANS!

STEADY AIM THERE, BROTHER PENDENNING.
WE'RE WANTIN' T'RESCUE THE CAP'N, NOT BLOW HIS SKULL APART.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ASSURANCES, MACDIDDEN.

BUT I AM QUITE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACING MY SHOT WITH CARE.

BLESS YOUR SOUL, YOU OLD ROUNDHEAD.

UNNF!
L'ANGLAIS!

HE ESCAPES! THIS IS ALL HIS DO.NG.
AGHK!
JH!
VISEZ AVEC SOIN.
BY A FRENCH ROPE OR FRENCH MUSKET, HE WILL PAY JUST THE SAME.

PRÊT!

FEU!

HUNH!

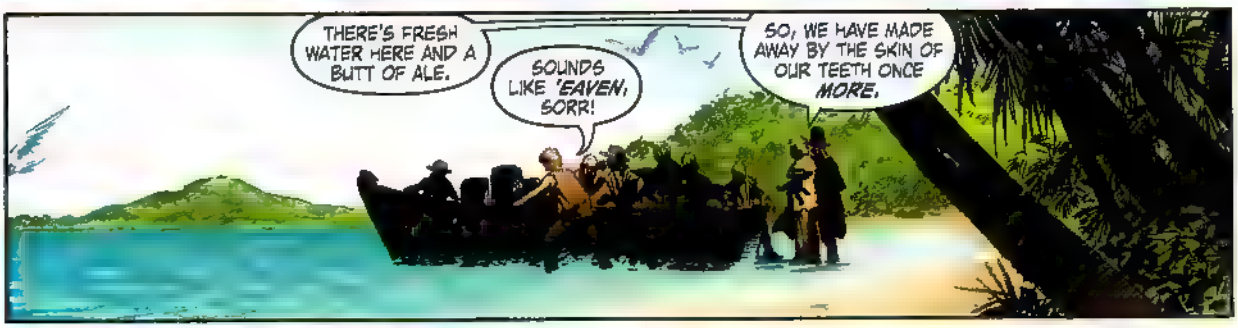
A WESTING BREEZE FROM *HELL!*

CUTTING IT A BIT CLOSE TO THE WIND, MISTER PENDENNING.
BY GOD'S MERCY, YOUR SKIN IS WHOLE. IT IS ENOUGH.
INNA THE WAGON YE GO, SORR.
THESE FRENCH WILL COME TO THEIR SENSES SOON. WE MUST BE AWAY BY THEN, CAPTAIN!
UNNFF!
A GRAND SHOW, BROTHER.
WORTH THE LOSS OF A ROTTEN OL' SHIP TAE SET A BLAZE LIKE THIS.

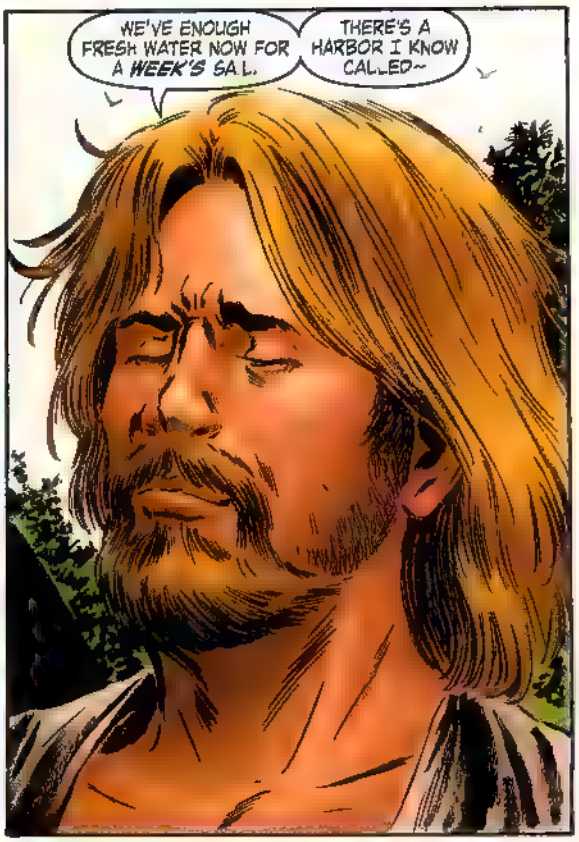
I WASN'T CERTAIN YOU LADS WOULD COME FOR ME.
DINNA TALK NONSENSE, SORR!
THE FIRESHIP WAS A RATHER DRAMATIC CHOICE.
BLAME THE SCOT FOR THAT ONE, CAPTAIN.
AND YE WAS A' WEE SHORT A'STRATEGES, BROTHER.
WHEN YE WAS TAKEN BY THEM FRENCHIES, WE DINNA KNOW WHAT TAE DO.
SO LONG AS YOU SAVED MY NECK FROM THE GIBBET, I'M IN NO POSITION TO ARGUE WITH YOUR COURSE.
A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR A FEW BARRELS OF WATER, EH?
I HOPE YE HAD A FAIR LOOK ABOUT LA TRINITÉ.
ALL I COULD SEE FROM THE GALLOWS STEP, BROPHELIS.
HM.

AH, LA RESPONSE BARBELÉE. HAS THERE EVER BEEN A PRETTIER SIGHT, LADS?
SHE'S ROTTING BENEATH THE WATERLINE, CAPTAIN.
NOT MUCH FITTER THAN THE VESSE.. WE SET ABLAZE.
EVER THE POET, ARE WE, BROPHELUS?
THESE CASKS I.. GET US AS FAR AS ANOTHER, FRIENDLIER PORT TO TAKE ON STORES.
THEN WE SHALL SEE TO HER HUL..

HAUL AWAY, LADS, AND MAKE QUICK. THOSE FRENCHIES MAY YET AWAKEN TO MY ESCAPE.
AYE, CAP'N.


THERE'S FRESH WATER HERE AND A BUTT OF ALE.
SOUNDS LIKE 'EAVEN, SORR!
SO, WE HAVE MADE AWAY BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH ONCE MORE.

ANY NOTION OF WHERE WE ARE OFF TO NOW?
SOME PORT OUTSIDE THE LAW, BROPHELIS.


WE'VE ENOUGH FRESH WATER NOW FOR A WEEK'S SAIL.
THERE'S A HARBOR I KNOW CALLED~

"--PARLATUVIER ON TOBAGO."

♫♫ "YE LADDIES, ALL AS YE PASS BY ♩ COME FOR A DRINK IF YE ARE DRY AN' RAISE A CUP TO BLACKJACK TOM ♫♫ FINEST CAPTAIN 'NEATH ♫♩ ♩ THE SKY! ♫

♩♫ O HUZZAH FOR CAP'N TOM! ♫♩ HAWK O' THE CARIBEE HUZZAH, HUZZAH FOR SKIPP'R TOM! ♫ THE DEVIL O' THE SEA! ♫

♩♫ THE SPANIARD HIDES, THE DUTCHMAN RUNS ♫♩ THE PORTOGEE AND FRENCHIE'S GUNS GO SILENT 'FORE BLACKJACK TOM, ♫♩ SCOURGE OF GOD AND ♩♫ ♩ SATAN'S SON!

♩♫ O HUZZAH FOR CAP'N TOM! ♫♩ WOLF O' THE CARIBEE HUZZAH, HUZZAH FOR SKIPP'R TOM! THE TERROR O' THE SEA! ♩

TO HELL WITH CAPTAIN TOM!

WHUH--?

I SAY, DAMN HIS EYES! BLACKJACK TOMMY IS NAUGHT BUT A TALE T' FRIGHTEN CHILDREN!

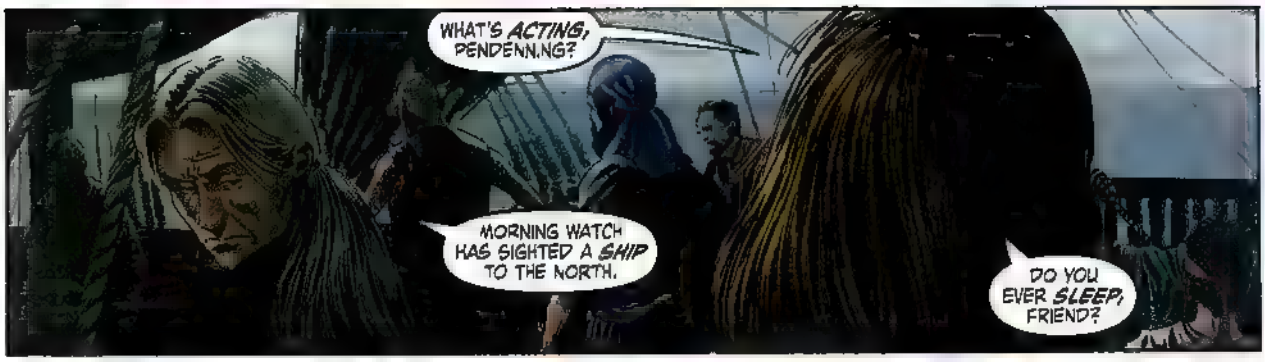
I'D NOT SAIL 'NEATH HIS COLORS FOR--

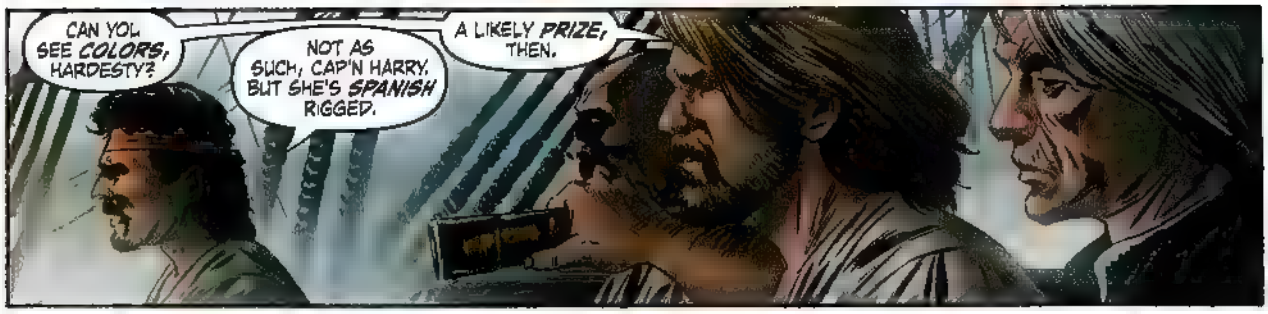
EH?

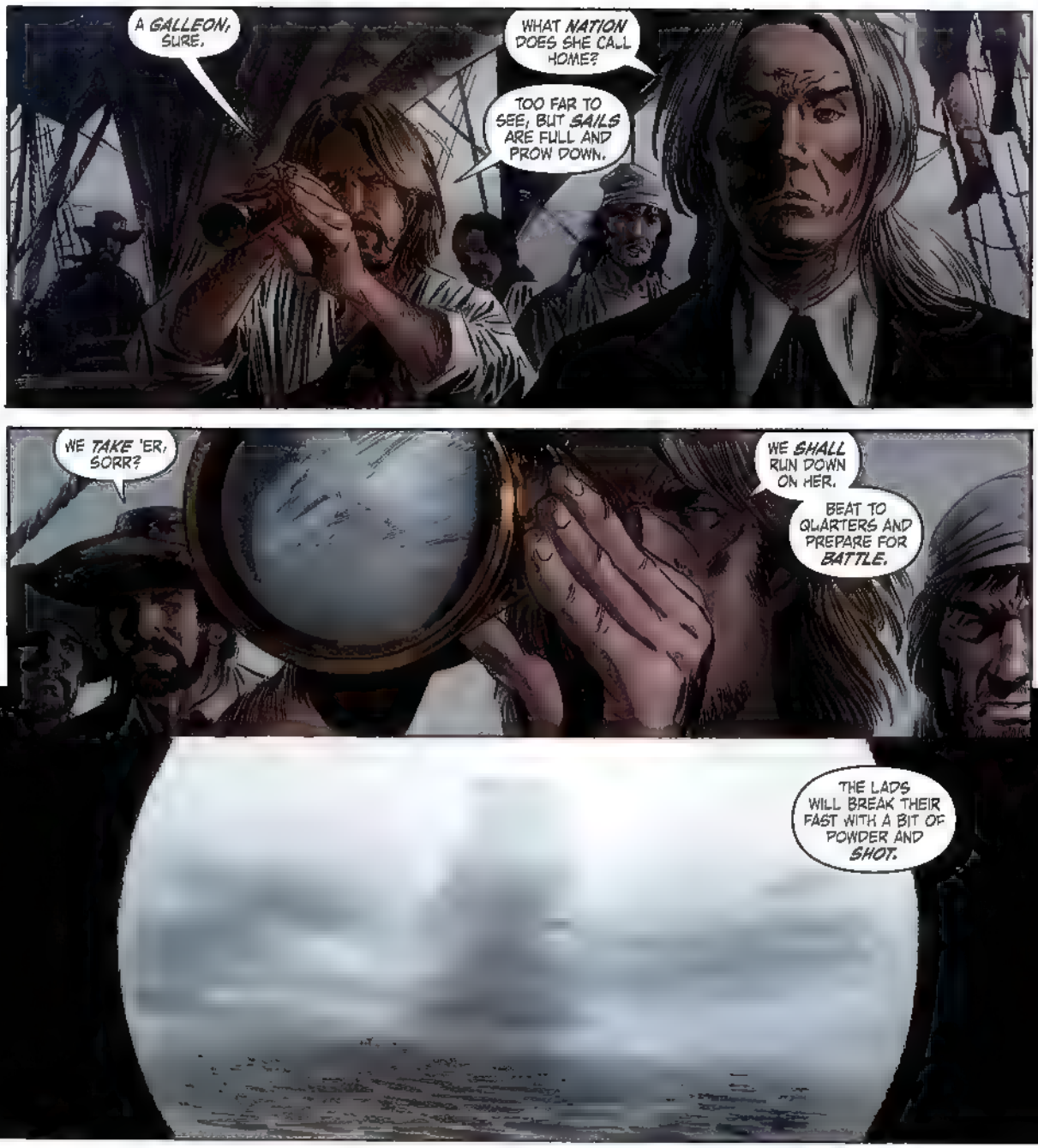
HOW'S A MAN T'CONCENTRATE ON HIS PLAY WITH SUCH A NOISOME BABBLE?

WORLD'S A FINER PLACE *WITHOUT* THAT MOTHERLESS SCUT, TOM.
WHERE WE BE OFF TO FROM *HERE*, CAP'N? A FAIR WIND BUILDS TO *CARRY* US FROM THIS PORT.
BY MORNING TIDE, CREED.
AND OUR *LANDFALL*?
ALL IN GOOD *TIME*, CREED.
A HAND *LARDED* WITH FINE DAMES! HAVE YOU LADS ANYTHING THAT MIGHT *BEST* MY LUCK?
I'VE DEUCES, A TREY, A FOOL--
HAW!
--*AND* A MUSKETOON YET LOADED WITH BALL.
OH.
GATHER ME *LUCRE*, CREED.
NOT ONE TO PLAY BY THE *RULES*, EH?
I SET ME *OWN* COURSE, I DO.

"AND IT AIN'T *WISE* T'CROSS ME BOW."
DECK THERE!
A *SAIL!*


WHAT'S *ACTING*, PENDENN.NG?
MORNING WATCH HAS SIGHTED A *SHIP* TO THE NORTH.
DO YOU EVER *SLEEP*, FRIEND?


CAN YOU SEE *COLORS*, HARDESTY?
NOT AS SUCH, CAP'N HARRY, BUT SHE'S *SPANISH* RIGGED.
A LIKELY *PRIZE*, THEN.


A GALLEON, SURE.
WHAT NATION DOES SHE CALL HOME?
TOO FAR TO SEE, BUT SAILS ARE FULL AND PROW DOWN.
WE TAKE 'ER, SORR?
WE SHALL RUN DOWN ON HER.
BEAT TO QUARTERS AND PREPARE FOR BATTLE.
THE LADS WILL BREAK THEIR FAST WITH A BIT OF POWDER AND SHOT.
PER TUTTI I DIAVOLI!

A SAIL!
A SAIL TO THE SOUTH AND TURNING ON US!
WE'VE A SHIP ON OUR TACK--
--LASS
MY APOLOGIES, SEÑOR OAKES,
BUT MY LAST AWAKENING WAS A STARTLING ONE.
AYE, CAP'N. O MIGHT TENDER ME OWN REGRETS F'R THE EARLY HOUR.
ONLY THERE'S A SHIP MAKING TO CROSS OUR PATH--

"~AN' OI DOUBT SHE MEANS US OUGHT BUT *HARM*, CAP'N SIN."
SHE FLIES THE BANNER OF THE *PAPACY*. A *SPANISH* VESSEL I'D WAGER, AND FAIR GAME.
SHALL WE *EARN* THE KING'S SH LL.NG AND MORE BESIDES?
DOUBLE-SHOT THE GUNS AND LET US GIVE *CHASE*.

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CrossGen

#4 JAN 2004

El Cazador™

DEADSHOT

Chuck Dixon Steve Epting Jason Keith

PREVIOUSLY IN *El Cazador*™

Europe is in a rare moment of peace, though there is a sense that old rivals are simply gathering strength for renewed hostilities. While the Old World basks in a momentary respite, the lands beyond are a cauldron of violence and greed. For these are the final days of the Golden Age of Piracy, when no ship was safe whether it sail the waters of the East Indies or follow the currents to the Caribbean.

They were cutthroats and devils who flew colors that warned of a terrible retribution toward any who dared oppose them. And often these colors hid their true mission, for many of these freebooters sailed secretly under the protection of the crowns of Europe.

Chasing the rogues that slew her loved ones, the former Spanish Contessa now known as Captain Sin is about to be sorely tested as El Cazador, the ship she recently commandered, is set upon by the English privateer Redhand Harry.

Chuck DIXON Writer

Steve EPTING Illustrator

Lovern KEITH Colorist

Dave LANPHEAR Letterer

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***El Cazador*™ Vol. 1, Issue 4 JANUARY 2004 FIRST PRINTING. Published by CrossGen Comics, LLC Office of publication 4023 Tampa Road Suite 2400, Oldsmar, Florida 34677 CrossGen®, CrossGen Comics®, CrossGeneration®, and the CrossGen sigil® are registered trademarks of CrossGen Intellectual Property, LLC El Cazador™ and all prominent characters and images are Trademark and Copyright 2003 CrossGen Intellectual Property LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED The stories incidents and characters in this publication are fictional. Any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this book may be reproduced in any form without the express written consent of CrossGen Comics, LLC. PRINTED IN CANADA**

ALL HANDS ALOFT!
WE NEED EVER' JACK AND EVER' YARD O' CANVAS FULL!

THEY'RE *FINE* LADS, BUT THERE'S SCARCE ENOW T'SA... THIS VESSEL *PROPER*, CAP'N SIN.

AND THEMS ON OUR AFT HAVE *HOURS* OF DAYLIGHT T MAKE CHASE.

THEY WILL HAVE TO *DO*, GODSHALL.

TWIXT *MAROONIN'* THAT LOT AND THEM'S THAT *DIED* N THE ATTEMPT, WE RE NO FULL COMPANY.

ALL WE NEED DO IS RUN *AHEAD* OF OUR PURSUER.

WE'VE ENOUGH OF A *LEAD*.

THEY HAVE A *BOWCHASER!*

THE *INGLESE* CAN STR KE OUR *STERN!*

STEADY, LASS

DON T ALLOW TH'LADS T SEE YER FEAR.

QUE DIOS NOS BENDIGA.

THE INGLESE FALL **SHORT!** HA!

PRIDE COMETH BEFORE **DAMNATION,** SPADINO. THOSE SCUTS'RE GETTIN' OUR **RANGE.**

"AND THEY'LL HAVE IT SOON **ENOW** 'LESS WE PUT ON MORE **SAIL.**"

S'X CABLES SHY, MacDIDDEN. LOAD AND RUN OUT FOR WHEN WE C..OSE THE DISTANCE.

YE **HEARD** THE CAP'N. STEP **TO** IT!

YOU SPEAK WITH MORE CERTAINTY THAN **WARRANTED,** CAPTAIN.

WE'LL **NOT** NARROW THE GAP WITH OUR HULL SO BEDRAGGED WITH WEED

IF WE HAD **BEACHED** THE SHIP AS I--

BUT THEN, **YOU** ARE NOT LORD AND MASTER OF THIS SHIP, BROTHER PENDENNING.

WE'LL **BRING** THIS PRIZE TO HEEL, MARK MY **WORDS.**

WILL THEY CATCH US?
THEY'VE MORE HANDS, OI'D RECKON, LAD. SHOULD THE WIND DIE THEY HAVE THE ADVANTAGE.
IF THE SCUTS GET CLOSE ENOW T'BOARD WE'RE DONE.
WE'RE NOT A THIRD O'THE CREW WE OUGHT BE.
NOT ENOUGH MEN TO STAND A FIGHT.
NOT ENOUGH HANDS TO MAKE A CHASE OF IT.
CAN WE STRIKE THEM WITH OUR GUNS, OAKES?
NAY, CAP'N. ONLY IF THEY CAME ALONGSIDE AND THEN WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD.
CALL THE GUNNERY MATE.
VAN WESSEL!
JA?

YOU SEE, IT IS JUST AS I SAID, HENRY.
I'VE OTHER CONCERNS THAN THIS, BROPHELIS.
NO CONCERN TAKES GREATER PRECEDENCE THAN THE WELFARE OF THIS VESSEL.
OR PERHAPS YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN TO THE PATRONS WHO FINANCED THIS VOYAGE WHY YOU LET THE BOTTOM ROT FROM UNDER THEIR SHIP?
WIND'S DYIN'! THE SAILS GO SLACK!
OUR QUARRY LIES BECALMED AS WELL, HENRY.
BLAST. WE'LL GET NO CLOSER IN THIS LIFELESS AIR.
BO'SUN!
I NEED STRONG BACKS T'BRING US IN REACH.
AYE!

MAKE MET DER CHOPS, DOOR DE DUIVEL!
THIS IS MADNESS, CAP'N.
THAT MAD DUTCHMAN'S MAKIN' MORE RUIN THAN A THIRTY POUND BALL MIGHT.
SPOKEN AS A TRUE CARPENTER, OAKES.
BUT SHOULD OUR PURSLER CHANCE A LUCKY SHOT TO OUR RUDDER, WE'LL BE HELPLESS.
WE CAN ONLY HOPE THE WIND FAVORS US OVER HIM.
ALL I SEE IS THE WORK THAT NEEDS DOIN' WHEN NEXT WE MAKE PORT!
SIGNORA! CAST AN EYE STERNWARDS!

¡MALEDICION!
WHAT IS THAT MADMAN ABOUT?
"HE DRAGS HIS VESSEL WITHIN RANGE!"
HEAVE TO, LADS! 'TIS SLOW BUT IT WILL DO.
A CABLE'S LENGTH MORE AND WE'LL GIVE THESE DONS A WHIFF OF ENGLISH BRIMSTONE!

UNNH!
GUNH!
DUW!
DUW!
AND CARE NIET TO SCRATCH MIJN KANON, WAAR?
CLEAR US A WAY, VERVLOEK DUIVELS!
LOAD MET DOUBLE SHOT EN EXTRA POWDER!
WE TAKE SHE BELOW DER WATER LINE, WAAR!

WE'RE WITHIN ACCURATE RANGE!
GIVE HER A ROUND THROUGH THE STERN!
FIRE LEVEL WITH THE MAIN DECK, MacDIDDEN.
I KNOW ME TASKS, YER SCUTTIN' PURITAN! SIGHTIN' HER .N.
HEEL GOED-- HEEL GOED--
LIKE A SLEEPING DUCK, WAAR?
FUSE! FUSE!
EN STAND CLEAR! DER KANON IS NIET BELAYED PROPER!

A HOT ROUND THROUGH HER AFT WILL SHOW OUR INTENTIONS.

SHE'LL STRIKE HER COLORS THEN, LADS.

ON THE DOWNROLL!

FIRE!

WAARSCHUWING!

STAKING!
NOLED BELOW DER ZEE!
SHE WILL SINK BY THE BOW!
WHAT SAY YOU NOW, OAKES?
WE ARE STILL IN DANGER, CAP'N. NARY A BREEZE T' BLOW US CLEAR.
THEY MIGHTEN HOVE IN RANGE YET.
UN VENTO FORTUNATO.
DIOS PROVEERA.
GOD WILL PROVIDE.

WHAT IS THE DAMAGE, PENDENNING?
HOLED 'NEATH THE WATERLINE.
MIGHT WE FOTHER A SAIL OVER THE BREACH?
IT IS POSSIBLE, HENRY.
ARE THE PUMPS MANNED, AT LEAST?
I ORDERED SO AS SOON AS I WAS ABLE.
YOUR ARM--
A SPLINTER. NAUGHT TO CONCERN YOU, SIR.
I FEAR THE SCOTSMAN DID NOT FARE AS FORTUNATE.
MACDIDDEN'S A TOUGH OLD CELT. HE'LL BE BACK SWINGING A ROPE'S END BY MORNING.
AS YOU SAY, HENRY.

THEIR SAVIOR SMILES ON THOSE DONS, EH?
ONE SHOT IN A THOUSAND AND NOW THE WIND BOUNDS THEM AWAY WHILE WE NEAR FLOUNDER.
"ON ANOTHER DAY, I MIGHT STAND THEIR CAPTAIN A MUG OF ALE."
YOU'VE DELIVERED US ALL, VAN WESSEL.
JA, MIJN EYE IS NOT SO WEAK, WAAR?
HUZZAH FOR THE DUTCHMAN!
HUZZAH!
ALL HANDS T'BRACES!
FIST SOME SAIL, YE LAZY SCUTS!
O, WHAT HAVE YE DONE TME LOVELY CRAFT?
A PITY, A CRYIN' PITY, IT IS.

"NO BOAT SHOULD SUFFER THUS."
CAN YOU PLUG THE RENT, SIMMS?
CANNON DONE IN A NONCE WHAT THE WEEVILS BEEN DOIN' F'R WEEKS, ZURR.
ALL'S WE CAN DO IS PUMP AND MAKE F R SHORE.
EVEN THE WOODWRIGHT SCHOOLS ME ON THE HULL'S CONDITION.
PERHAPS YOU'LL LISTEN TO SIMMS. YOU ARE DEAF TO ME, HENRY.
TELL MacDIDDEN TO MAKE A COURSE FOR THE NEAREST LANDFALL.
MacDIDDEN HAS DIED.
JUST LIKE THAT?
DAMN YOUR EYES, BROPHEUS, HAVE YOU NO MERCY FOR A MAN'S HEART TO TELL ME THUS?
HAVE YOU, HENRY?
CALL THE SAILING MATE TO ME--

"--WE'LL PUT IN AND *CAREEN* AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY."

ALL GOES *WELL*, I TRUST?

THE LADS WILL SCRAPE THE WEEDS AND WORMS FROM THE HULL. THE CARGO AND GUNS HAVE BEEN OFFLOADED.

THEY COMPLETE THE SHORE BATTERIES LEST AN *UNCHARITABLE* SAIL HOVE NEAR.

A BIT O' *CARPENTRY* WORK AND RE-CAULKING AND WE SHALL BE BOUND AWAY.

BUT WE *WILL* NEED FRUIT, MEAT, AND CLEAR WATER FOR STORES.

I'LL LEAD A PARTY *INLAND*, BROTHER PENDENNYS.

I *FANCY* A LOOK ABOUT AND A CHANCE T'STRETCH ME LEGS.

I CAUTION YOU--

"-- NOT TO STRETCH YOUR NECK IN THE BARGAIN."
I SMEL- A FIRE. SOMEONE ROASTS A PIG, EH?
:SNIFF!: :SNIFF!:
THAT NO PIG, NO.
MERCIFUL LORD--

MOTHERLESS CURS!

POOR DEVILS.
TO DIE AS A LAMB NEATH THE BUTCHER'S BLADE.

CAP'N HARRY!
THIS ONE YET LIVES!

GET 'IM SOME WATER, LADS!
WHAT SHIP ARE YOU FROM? WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THIS FATE, MAN?

JEAN GILLON--
--STRANDED BY THE WITCH OF EL CAZADOR--

Lady Death: THE WILD HUNT PREVIEW INSIDE!

CrossGen
#5 MAR 2004

Chuck Dixon Steve Epting Jason Keith

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They were cutthroats and devils who flew colors that warned of a terrible retribution toward any who dared oppose them. And often these colors hid their true mission, for many of these freebooters sailed secretly under the protection of the crowns of Europe.

Captain Sin has brought her crew safely from a battle with the English Privateer Redhand Harry. El Cazador now puts into port in search of Blackjack Tom.

Chuck DIXON
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Steve EPTING
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The Port of Parlatuvier on Tobago Isle.
I NO SEE THE DEVIL'S DUE, SIGNORA.
NOR THE BUTCHER'S BILL, CURSE THEIR BONES
THEN BLACKJACK TOM IS NO LONGER HERE--

--AND MY *MOTHER* AND *BROTHER* ARE GONE AS WELL.

AYE, HOSTAGES OF SUCH VALUE OL' TOMMY D KEEP *CLOSE*, CAP'N S N.

ME SYMPATHIES AND SORROWS, MA'AM.

THERE'LL BE *QUESTIONS*, NO DOUBT N. THE SCUTTERS WHAT HAUNT THIS PORT ... KEEP A *WEATHER* EYE ON US.

GODSHALL IS *RIGHT*, CAPTAIN. BLACKJACK EXPECTED HIS PRIZE SHIP IN PORT *LONG* AFORE THIS.

THEN WE SHALL HAVE TO WATCH OUR *STEP*, ABDULLAH.

BUT WE *MUST* NEEDS GO ASHORE. I WOULD SEEK THE *WHEREABOUTS* OF MY FAMILY'S ABDUCTOR.

AND WE ALSO NEED MORE ABLE *HANDS* TO SAIL EL CAZADOR

DO YOU BELIEVE WE WILL FILL OUT OUR COMPLEMENT HERE IN PARLATUVIER, OAKES?
GIVE ME OWN THOUGHTS ON SUCH, MAAM.

THAT VESSEL THERE, OAKES, WHAT IS THAT WRETCHED SMELL?
BLACKBIRDER, MA AM
SLAVEN, WAAR?

AYE, DUTCHMAN. A SLAVER. COMIN' FROM THE GHANA COAST OR THEREBOUTS.
BOUND FOR BRAZILIA OR SOME BLIGHTED SUGAR FARM
BUT THAT STENCH.

THREE MONTH PASSAGE AN HOT AS HELLS HINGES BELOWDECKS.
THAT'S A SHIP O THE DEAD, MA AM.

SO WHAT ESTABLISHMENT WOULD MOST LIKELY HOUSE VILLAINS WHO MIGHT TELL US OF BLACKJACK TOM'S NEXT PORT?
YE'VE TRULY SET YOUR SAILS ON THIS COURSE, MA'AM?
SET AND LASHED, OAKES.
THE GOOD KING JAMES WAS FAVORED BY OL' TOMMY.
A DONKEY WITH A CROWN?
JAMES
JAMES AIN'T MUCH ADMIRED BY THE BRETHREN, MA'AM.
A DOXY, A DUTCHMAN, AN' A TINKER'S DAMN.
AN' WHAT'S YOUR NAME, LOVELY?
DONESSA CINZIA ELENA MARIA
--CAPTAIN SIN!
AN' YE BEST MIND YOUR MANNERS, CULLY

A LADY SKIPPER? HAW!

AN' YE SEEK OL' BLACKJACK IN THE *VERY* SHIP HE WAS CALLIN *CURSES* DOWN ON NOT TWO NIGHTS PASSED.

AID US BY *REVEALING* THE DESTINATION OF THE DEVIL'S DUE AND YOUR REWARD WILL BE *CONSIDERABLE.*

AN' SHOULD I INSTEAD OFFER YOUR PRETTY *HEAD* TO OL' BLACKJACK ON A SILVER TRAY--

--ME REWARD IS LIKELY T' BE *INSURMOUNTABLE,* EH?

HA HA HA!

SO, YOU'LL NOT BE *CHARITABLE.*

NU, JUFFROUW?

NOW, VAN WESSEL.

ARRRRRRR!

SCHURK, WAAR!
UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO BE MORE HELPFUL THAN YOUR FRIEND I SUGGEST YOU CABALLEROS REMAIN STILL.
FINGERS OFF THEM HARBUSKERS, LADS
¡UNNH!¿
¡UH!¿
YE SEEK BLACKJACK? YE SEEK HIS TREASURE COVE?
¿QUE?
YOU KNOW WHERE SAILS THE DEVIL'S DUE?
ALL KNOWS THAT SEÑORITA.
SERPENT-HEAD CAY?
OH! OH!
NOT ALOUD! WHISPERS LASS. WHISPERS!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHERE TO FIND THAT ISLE.
YE SPEAK TRUE, SEÑORITA.
BUT I KNOW THE MAN WHAT DOES.
"MAIS OUI, THEY CALLED HER CAPITAN SIN."

A FEMALE BUCCANEER? AND A CAPTAIN. THOSE SAVAGES ADDLED YOUR BRAINS, GALLON.
IT IS TRUE, MONSIEURS.
SHE IS A FURY. A WITCH. I BELIEVE SHE IS BRIDE TO BLACKJACK TOM
I QUESTIONED A SINGLE ORDER AND SHE MAROONED ME AND MON AMIS TO THIS ISLAND.
IF NOT FOR YOU AND YOUR MEN I WOULD BE-- CONSUMED.
A WOMAN, YOU SAY?
SURELY YOU DO NOT CREDIT THIS NONSENSE, HARRY?
THIS WAS A SHIP UNKNOWN TO ME AFORE THIS, PENDENNING. SHE CERTAINLY MAULED US.
WHY NOT A LADY PIRATE?
EL CAZADOR, EH? AND WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT, I WONDER?

"THE HUNTER, EH? WHAT'S SHE HUNTIN' THEN?"
'ERE, MISSY. ERE BE THE ISLE YE SEEK.
SAINTS AND DEVILS.
AND WHAT BE THERE THAT'S WORTH SAILIN' INTO HADES FOR?
SCHUYLER TRUE.
THE SEA DOCTOR?
WHO IS THIS MAN OAKES?
TRUE WAS CLOSE WITH OL BLACKJACK. PLANNED HIS RAIDS AND SUCH LIKE THAT.
KNOWS EVERY BAY AND BACKWATER IN THESE ISLANDS. T'IS WHY HE BE CALLED THE SEA DOCTOR
THEN HE KNOWS WHERE TO FIND THE VILLAIN WHO HOLDS MY FAMILY.
CEPT HE BE A PRISONER ON CANALON del INFIERNO.
T'IS A JESUIT FORTRESS WHERE THEY LOCK AWAY ENEMIES OF THE POPE.
PAY THE OLD MAN THEN OAKES.
AND WE WEIGH ANCHOR FOR HADES.

E YE D NOT KILLED B ..O DANE WE'D HAVE THE BEARINGS FOR SERPENT-EAD
ONLY HIM AN' BLACKJACK AN OL ELIJAH CREED KNEW THEM CHARTS
I WOULD SEND HIM TO BARK N SATAN S INFERNO A HUNDRED TIMES OVER EVEN HAD I KNOWN THAT

BUT, MY LADY-- MY CAPTAIN--HOW ARE WE TO SAIL INTO THE TEETH OF THE MOST FORTIFIED PORT IN THE CARIBEE?
OUR VESSEL IS NOT NEARLY HALF MANNED.
THEN WE MUST FIND A READY CREW, SENOR OAKES.

BEGG'N' YER PARDON, CAP'N, BUT THERE'S NOT MANY WOULD CHOOSE TO SERVE A LADY SKIPPER.
THEN WE SHALL HAVE TO FIND MEN WHO HAVE NO CHOICE.
SUCH AS--

SUCH AS SLAVES, OAKES.

"--YE RELISH A NIGHTMARE, DON'T YE, MA'AM."

NO!

WHERE--?
IT IS I, CAPTAIN NEWCOMB.
HIGH TIDE IS HERE AND WE ARE READY TO RIGHT THE BARBELEE.

YES--OF COURSE.
WITH A CLEAN HULL WE SHALL MAKE BETTER TIME IN PURSUIT OF THIS EL CAZADOR.

IF YOU STILL INSIST ON PURSUING THIS PHANTOM, CAPTAIN.
I DO PENDENNING. I DO.

IF THIS PIRATE QUEEN CAN LEAD US TO JOHN THOMAS AND HIS FABLED HORDE OF LUCRE, THEN THERE WILL BE GOLD ENOUGH--
--ENOUGH TO MAKE ALL RIGHT, SIR?

NO, BROTHER BORPHELUS--
THERE IS NOT ENOUGH GOLD UNDER GOD'S HEAVEN FOR THAT.

CONTINUE YOUR SONG, FIDDLER.
WE HAVE NEED OF A MUSICIAN ON EL CAZADOR.
SMALLBONE! SILENCE THAT--
UH?
BOARDERS.

AT ARMS!
REPEL BOARDERS!
GUNNH!
WE'RE BOARDED, LADS
AVE AT 'EM AN --

YOU WILL STRIKE OR YOU WILL DIE.
I DECLARE THIS SHIP A PRIZE OF EL CAZADOR.
YOU MAY CHOOSE TO JOIN US ON THE ACCOUNT AND SHARE IN FUTURE SPOILS--
--OR SWIM TO SHORE

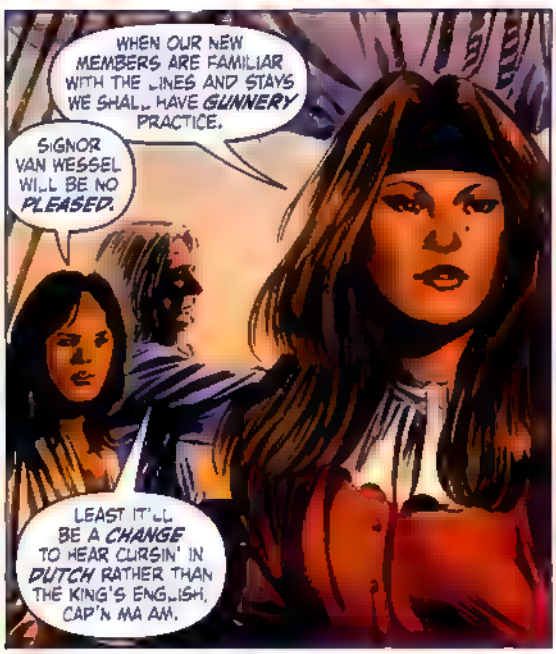
WE'LL RENAME HER EL SABUESO· THE BLOODHOUND.
I COUNT A GOOD DOZEN OR SO ABLE HANDS, ABDULLAH.
AND WHO KNOWS HOW MANY SLAVES BELOW.
AS YOU SAY, MY CAPTAIN.

POR DIOS, THEY ARE STARVED.
CAN YOU SPEAK TO THEM ABDULLAH?
I KNOW SOME OF THE TONGUES FROM THE SLAVE MARKETS IN DAR ES SALAAM.

OCH.
O! LL NOT SERVE WITH THEM, CAP'N MA'AM.
THEY ARE MEN JUST AS YOURSELF, CRANDALL.
AYE.
BUT THEY AIN'T SAILORS, MA'AM.
FEED THEM AND GIVE THEM FRESH CLOTHES FROM STORES.
TELL THEM I OFFER FREEDOM AND A PLACE IN THE BROTHERHOOD.
CRANDALL SPEAKS TRUTH.
THESE AIN'T GOT NO KNOWIN' O SEAFARIN'.
FOR BREAD TO FILL THEIR STOMACHS THEY WILL LEARN.
DIVIDE THE [illegible]LE HANDS BETWEEN BOTH VESSELS--

"--WE PUT TO SEA FOR CANALON de! INFIERNO."
CURSE YOUR EYES, PUT SOME BACK INTO IT
SECURE THAT LINE FAST, LADDIE

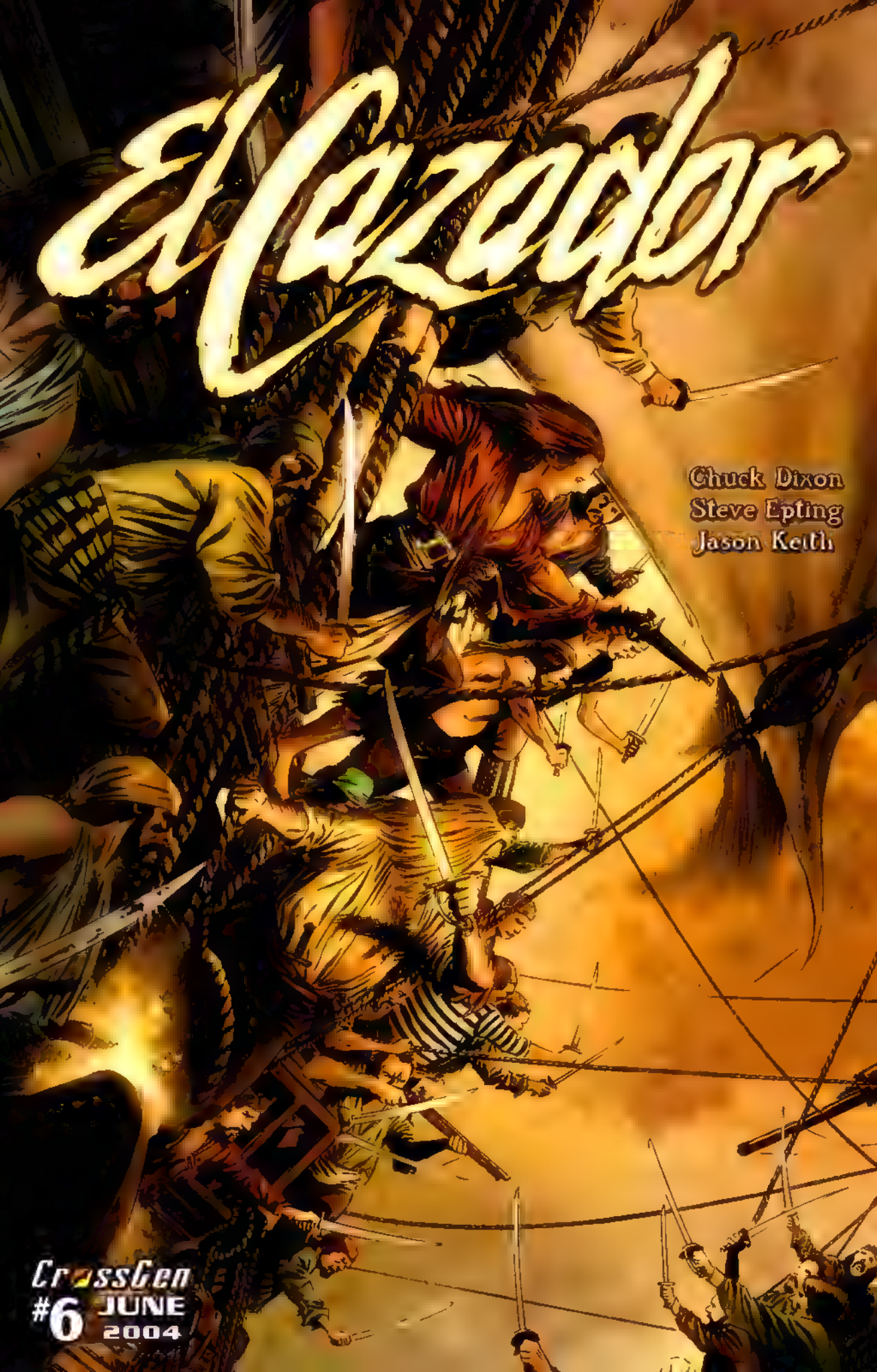
TO LARBOARD, YE CURS! LARBOARD, O! SAYS!
HOPELESS! BLOODY HOPELESS!


WHEN OUR NEW MEMBERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE LINES AND STAYS WE SHALL HAVE GUNNERY PRACTICE.
SIGNOR VAN WESSEL WILL BE NO PLEASED.
LEAST IT'LL BE A CHANGE TO HEAR CURSIN' IN DUTCH RATHER THAN THE KING'S ENGLISH, CAP'N MA AM.

SAILIN' WITH ALL SPEED INTO THE MOUTH O' AN ARMADA WITH A CREW HALF-MADE O HEATHEN SAVAGES--
--I WONDERS IF I AIN'T GONE MAD AS WELL AS BLIND.

PROVIDENCE WILL SEE US THROUGH, GODSHALL.
SCHUYLER TRUE WILL BE DELIVERED TO US AND LEAD US TO BLACKJACK TOM.

"THEN I SHALL HAVE MI FAMILIA, AND YOU A FORTUNE BEYOND MEASURE."
SPANISH-RIGGED, OR I M A FOOL.
IT IS THE GALLEON WE SEEK, MON CAPITAN. I FEEL IT IN MY BONES.
I RECOGNIZE HER AS WELL, G LLON. CERTAINLY THE CRAFT THAT HOLED OUR BOW.
LADS!
WE SIGHT THE OUTLAW THAT TOOK OUR HONOR AND THE LIFE OF MISTER MACDIDDEN.
HOW SHALL WE REPAY THIS WORTHY?
DEATH! DEATH! DEATH!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Redhand Harry closes on the pirate ship El Cazador, catching Captain Sin with her vessel far short of the hands needed for a fight at sea.

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RUN OUT! RUN OUT!
RUN OUT THE BOWCHASERS!

THERE'S *TWO* VESSELS, CAP'N HARRY.

FIRE ON THE *CLOSEST* FOR RANGE, CAWTHORNE.

THE SPANISH RIGGED *GALLEON.*

YE'LL NOT SLIP FROM ME *THIS* TIME, WITCH.

I'VE *TWO* TWELVE POUNDERS AT THE PROW TO HARRY YE.

FOR'ARD GUNS--

FIRE!

"ALL HANDS TO *BRACES!*

"WE'VE THE *WIND* ON 'EM, SURE!

"WE'LL CROSS THEIR BOW AND TEAR THE *GUTS* FROM 'ER!"

THE GUTS FROM HER, AS GOD'S MY WITNESS.
CAPTAIN NEWCOMB, WOULD IT NOT BE BEST TO REPAIR TO THE QUARTERDECK?
IT'S NOT A COMMANDER'S POSITION AFORE THE MAST.
IT'S A SEA CHASE, PENDENNING! NOT A LONDON PARLOR ROOM!
I KNOW LITTLE OF LONDON SOCIETY, HENRY. BUT I DO KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF ONE'S PLACE.
MY PLACE BE DAMNED!
I'LL NOT WATCH THIS DONESSA'S DEMISE FROM THE WEATHER RAIL.
"I WISH TO SEE HER FACE WHEN SHE RECOGNIZES THE BARBALEE."
I NEED TO RETURN TO EL CAZADOR!
THE ATTACKER NEARS, CAPTAIN SIN. WE--
NOW, ABDULLAH!

HOVE AWAY CLEAR IN THE SABUESO, ABDULLAH. YOU ARE IN COMMAND OF HER, AS YOU SPEAK THE AFRICAN'S TONGUE.
AYE, MY CAPTAIN.
I WILL DRAW THE ATTACKERS' FIRE TO ALLOW YOU FLIGHT.
MAKE FOR THE CAZADOR, LADS!
ELSE THEY HOIST SAIL WITHOUT US!
SIGNORA! WE RAISE ANCHOR!
WHAT HAS GODSHALL IN MIND FOR OUR ESCAPE?
NOTHING UNTIL YOU ARE ABOARD, CAPITAN!
GODSHALL!
I AM NOT DEAF, M'LADY.
THE GAUGE IS NOT WITH US.
SO WE SAIL FOR ROUND ROCK AND SHOW 'EM OUR WAKE!
THEN IT'S THE BEST SAILOR WHO WINS.

WE'LL RUN DOWN ON HER FOR CERTAIN, BROPHELS.
SHE'LL NEVER BEAT FROM HER POSITION IN TIME.
SIMMS! LAY ON MORE CLOTH!
WE'LL SWEEP ALONG HER FOR'ARD!
OUR QUARRY MAKES RUDDER FOR SHORE.
TO GAIN A MOMENTARY ADVANTAGE OF THE WIND?
OR TO MAKE FOR THE CHANNEL.
THERE'S SHOALS TWIXT ROUND ROCK AND THE ISLES LEADING TO FALLEN JERUSALEM.
EITHER SHE'S MAD OR A CANNY HAND AT THE TILLER.
SIMMS! THE CHARTS!
AND SOMEONE FOR'ARD WITH A LEAD!

THIS BE THE CHART FOR GINGER ISLAND, M'LADY?
SI, SEÑOR GODSHALL.
THERE LIES A CHANNEL BETWIXT GINGER AND SPANISHTOWN ON VIRGIN DEGALBA.

I SEE IT. A STRING OF SMALL ISLES.
NOT JUST ISLES, LASS, SANDBARS AN' CORAL REEFS AN' SLIP CURRENTS AN' THE LIKE.

IT BE A SMUGGLER'S GAUNTLET. WE LEAD THAT PRIVATEER IN AND STICK 'IM FAST.
BUT IF THE COURSE IS THAT TREACHEROUS, THEN HOW WILL WE NAVIGATE IT WITHOUT RUNNING AGROUND?
NAUGHT BE WRONG WITH ME HEARIN', AS I SAID, CAP'N.
AS THE RABBIT ELUDES THE HOUNDS BY ENTERING A BRIAR--
--SO SHALL WE LEAVE THIS PURSUER BEHIND.
BUT FOR THIS WE NEED SILENCE. ALL OF YOU, NOT EVEN A WHISPER.
KEEP AN EYE FOR THE LANDMARKS I ASK FOR, LADS.
THIS BE A MATTER OF HANDSBREADTHS, NO QUESTION.

WHAT ARE THEY ABOUT?
WILL THEY NOT STAND AND FIGHT?

SIMMS ASSURES ME THAT THERE IS NO SAFE WAY THROUGH THAT PASSAGE.
WE'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO PURSUE. YOU WERE ONCE OF HER COMPANY, GILLON. WHAT CAN THIS CAPTAIN SIN BE THINKING?
SHE IS A MADWOMAN, AS I SAY.

SHE DRIVES HER CREW LIKE A HARPY, MON CAPITAN.
WITH NO REGARD FOR HERSELF OR HER FELLOWS.

TWO FATHOMS'
LOOKS T'BE A FLOOR O'SHELL.

"WAY 'NEATH THE KEEL, NARROWIN' FEARSOME."
AYE--
-THIS N IS TIGHT, DARLIN
TIGHT

LAD, T'LARBOARD--
SI, SIGNOR GODSHALL?
SPY YE A ROCK LIKE A LION'S HEAD?
LIN LEONE, SI.
.N GOD'S GOOD GRACE WE ARE DELIVERED!
LOWER MAINS'LS AND PREPARE T'COME ABOUT!
SHE'S MAKING SAIL! WE SHALL DO THE SAME! I WANT ALL SPEED.
PREPARE TO RUN OUT!

THEY SET *TOPSAILS*, GODSHALL.

THEY WILL RUN *DOWN* ON US.

NOT BLOODY *LIKELY.*

THEY HALL WITHIN *RANGE.*

THE GUNS N THE FORE WILL CATCH US *TURNING.*

DOUBLE-SHOTTED, CAWTHORNE?

AND A BIT *O'CHAIN* F R GOOD MEASURE, CAP N.

IT IS LA FINS, MA JOLIE FILLE

KK-KRAK!

ARE WE *STRUCK?* THAT FELT _KE A WHOLE *BROADSIDE!*

I HEARD NO *SHOT!* WE ARE STOPPED *DEAD!*

DAMN THAT WOMAN

WHAT IS ACTING?

THE DECK *RISES!*

HOLD FAST!

SHE'S RUN US *AGROUND!*

WE'RE STUCK *FAST* IN THE SNARE AND THE HUNTER NEARS FOR THE KILL!

THE SHIP CANTS TO *STARBOARD*, GODSHALL, HER PORT GUNS POINT *SKYWARD*.

YER A SCUTTIN' *GENIUS*, GODSHALL!

MIND YERSELF, OAKES!

BOARDING PARTY! LOWER BOATS!

LOAD AND RUN OUT PORT GUNS FOR *COVERING* FIRE

SECURE FOR BOARDERS. MUSKETEERS ALOFT!

THEY AIN'T TAKIN US WITHOUT BLOODLETTIN'!

WE RE SAFE UNDER THEIR GUNS.

OUR CANNON WILL FIRE LAGRANGE INTO THEIR TOPS.

THEY STRIKE ONLY AT OUR RIGGING, NOT OUR MASTS!

SHE MEANS TO TAKE US, BY GOD!

SHE COMES.

NON--

NON--

SHOW THEM YOUR HEART AND YOUR FURY!
SHOW THEM THE PRICE PAID BY THOSE WHO HUNT EL CAZADOR!

A CANNONADE AND A BOARDING SIMULTANEOUS
THIS WITCH IS A PESTILENCE!

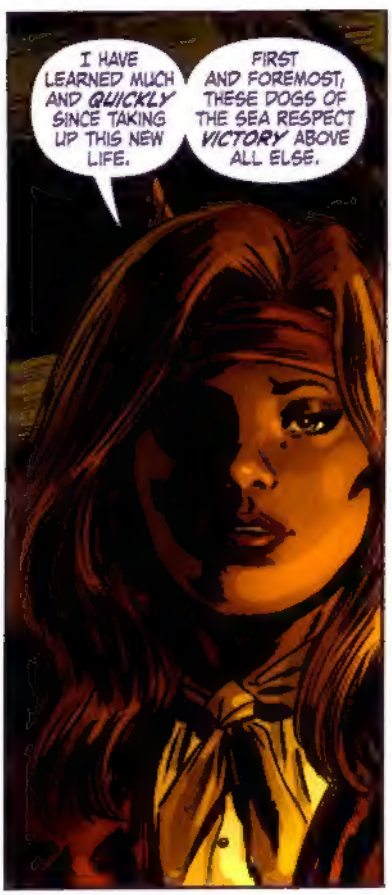
OVERLIJDEN!
ENGELZE ZWIJNEN, HAAR!
DRIVE FOR THE COMMAND DECK!
NOW, WHILE THEY ARE DAZED!
PRESS THE ATTACK, MIS HERMANOS!
LOS INGLESES FALTER! ADELANTE!
TOO MANY ENGELZE, HAAR?
THEN ONLY VALOR MAY EVEN THE ODDS, VAN WESSEL!
JA, MIJN CAPITAN!

VAINGLORIOUS STRUMPET!
I SCARCELY CREDITED THE FRENCHMEN'S CLAIMS, YET THERE SHE STANDS!
SHE'S BESTED US, HENRY!
NEVER!
YOU WOULD HAVE MY VESSEL, HARLOT?
STRIKE YOUR COLORS AND END THIS SLAUGHTER!
SLAY ME AND MY MEN WILL STRIKE!
YOU FORCE MY HAND, SEÑOR.
YE'LL NOT HAVE THE BARBALEE!
WHY DO YOU HUNT ME?
YOU'RE A BLOODY PIRATE, AIN'T YE?
YOU ARE A PRIVATEER, THEN?

AYE, AND IT'S THIEVIN' SCUM SUCH AS YOURSELF I PREY ON.
I HUNT PIRATES AS WELL. PERHAPS--
PERHAPS WHAT, YE--
WHUH--?
SHUNH!
NNNNN

WELCOME TO EL CAZADOR, CAPTAIN HARRY NEWCOMB.

YOUR SHIP AND COMPANY ARE MINE.
MANY OF YOUR LOYAL CREW WILLINGLY JOINED MY FLEET.
SEDUCER.


I HAVE LEARNED MUCH AND QUICKLY SINCE TAKING UP THIS NEW LIFE.
FIRST AND FOREMOST, THESE DOGS OF THE SEA RESPECT VICTORY ABOVE ALL ELSE.

AND NOW, YE'VE HAD A GLOAT AT MY EXPENSE--
--I SUPPOSE I'LL NOW SWING FROM A ROPE?

ACTUALLY, I OFFER YOU AN ALLIANCE.
DO YOU, BY CHANCE, SPEAK LATIN?

Next Issue:
El Cazador™
#7
Sister Vengeance!